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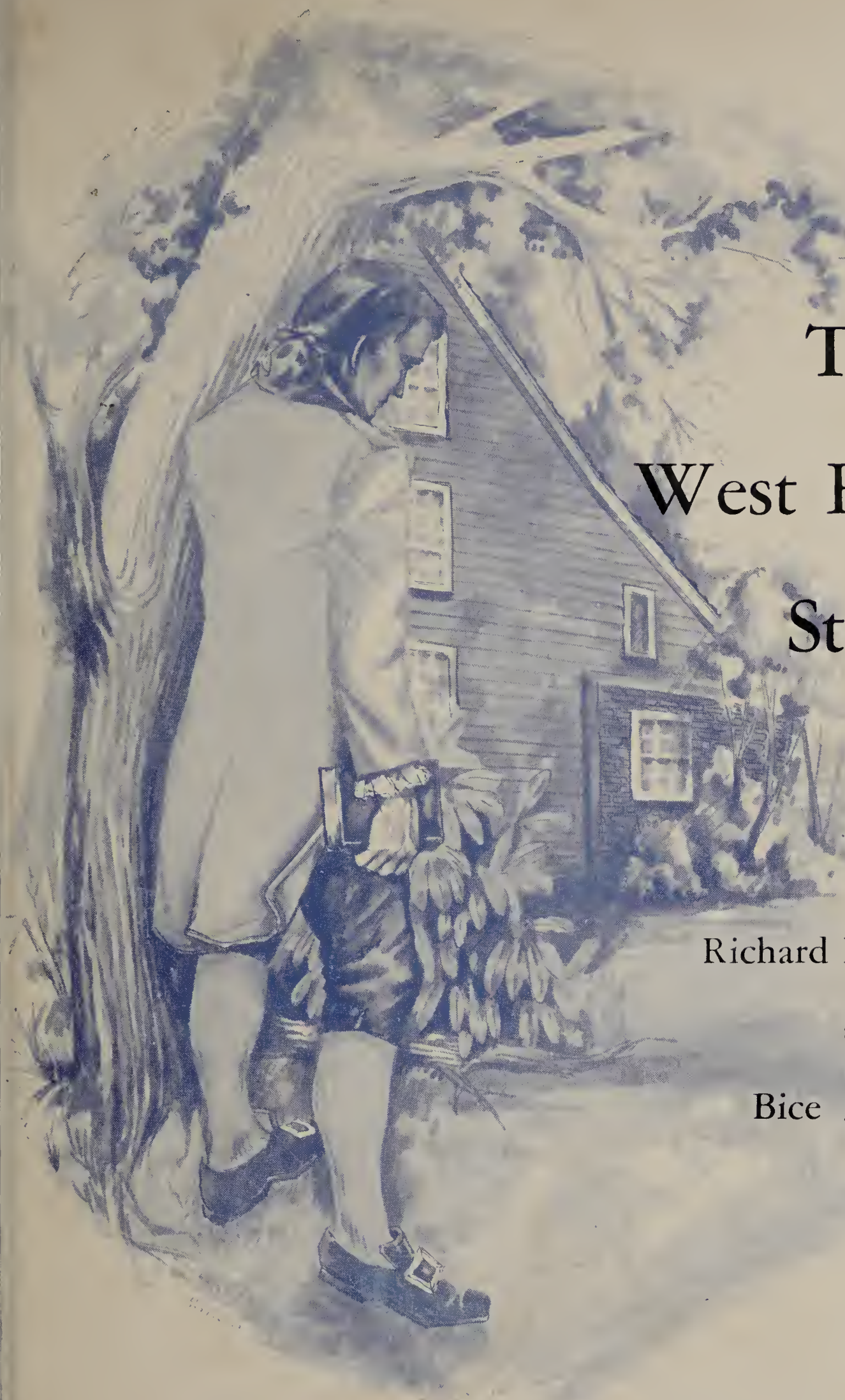

The West Hartford Story

by

Richard N. Boulton

and

Bice Clemow

Illustrated by Matt Klim

This account of the beginnings and the growth of West Hartford, Connecticut, published as a Special Supplement of the June 3, 1954 Centennial Souvenir issue of the West Hartford News, Vol. XXII, No. 32 Additional copies: One Dollar. The 100-year-old map on the back cover shows residents of the Town when it became separately incorporated in 1854. [Contents copyright, The West Hartford Publishing Co.]

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Allen County Public Library
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Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

To youth,

emerging from the past

to build the Town's tomorrow,

this story

is dedicated

in affection and respect.

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Authors' Note

WHO TAKES his pen to tell the story of a town does so in humility that dares not ring false. For buried in the heart of each hamlet lie, still, the sacred hopes of heros, those great and those unsung, upon which the present is built and upon which the future rises.

The West Hartford Story truly has been written through ages past by the courage and vision, faith and sacrifice of a long and proud procession of men and women — those who led and those who followed — from 1679 until this very day. What is set down in these pages is but a brief account of those events which have survived the perilous passage of time and have, in degree great or small, shaped the destiny of West Hartford. Our work is published in this modest form in the hope it can become available to all who share an interest in the beginning and growth of the place in which they live.

Much of the Town's intimate past has been lost because it was not set down. Yet more of the story of the first two centuries of life in the community has been uncovered than first seemed likely when this project was begun. During the past five years, musty official records, long-unopened family Bibles, and a zealous search through the accumulated memories of men and women still alive, have yielded much new material. Sharp-eyed readers will note the same names spelled in different ways. This is typical, even of the legal documents of an earlier day, and could not have been corrected without ruthlessly changing official records.

Throughout, the 1930 volume written by beloved William H. Hall as "West Hartford, Connecticut" has been our first point of reference. From there our gratitude shifts to the ever-helpful staff of the Connecticut State Library and the West Hartford Town Library. Many of the older residents of the Town have cheerfully contributed anecdotes and data. We are especially grateful to Louis N. Denniston for reading the final manuscript, and to Israel S. Grody for his continuing encouragement. Perhaps what helped as much as any one thing was the midnight patience of our wives. Finally, our publisher's apology for the mechanical limitations which require that the Table of Contents be at the end, rather than the beginning of the book.

— *THE AUTHORS*

West Hartford, Connecticut
June 3, 1954

I. TO BEGIN WITH

BETWEEN the ancient granite hills of eastern and western Connecticut a broad trough runs to the sea. In this trough is many a curious rock formation, far younger than the rugged hills that have, through changeless ages, bounded the Connecticut River valley. The story hidden deep in these rocks, upon which West Hartford solidly rises, is an intriguing chapter from nature's past.

In the timeless days before Mankind, the Connecticut valley was filled to the brim. Into the quiet waters of this great lake, or arm of the sea, flowed countless streams out of the time-worn hills, bringing down in tribute the mud and sands of New England. Along its muddy banks dinosaurs left their giant footprints, still etched in lava rocks.

Then, suddenly, a volcano spewed rolling floods of scorching lava over the whole area, turning into steam the water of the valley. The lava licked out over the beds of land-waste, cooling and hardening into black basalt and igneous rock. Three times Nature repeated this mighty process. And in the end, across the Connecticut River valley, lay three massive sheets of volcanic "trap" rock, awaiting their future.

Where the lava's bed was originally clay, the clay hardened into shale. Where it flowed over sand, sand-stone formed. And where the volcanic rock rested on pebbles, the hardened bed came to be what geologists know as "conglomerate."

Then, as millions of years passed, another violent upheaval tilted these three volcanic layers. When the earth's crust quieted down, the jagged layers had broken through the surface, sloping sharply to the east. As the countless years unfolded, wind and rain and stream cut the soft shale and sandstone adrift and washed it down to the sea. While the layers were being pushed sky-ward, they broke into mile-long islands. This "fragmentation" can still be seen in the "islands" scattered along the Connecticut valley.

Out of the fire and tribulation and earth's hard labor came a prosperous valley. The heat and pressure of the volcanic convulsions turned limestone into marble, shale into slate or mica. Out of ordinary rock, the white heat from the earth's core fashioned garnets and radio-active permantite.

West Hartford lies close to the western edge of this great primeval trough, the hills just beyond Simsbury and Southington. Talcott Mountain is lava from the second and greatest of the three eruptions. In Hartford, Trinity College stands on a bluff born when the third volcano erupted. From all these stone deposits have come the quarried rock which built many of the foundations, hearths and walls of many early West Hartford homes.

In the midst of these fiery beginnings

there was life. In some portions of the prehistoric lake, ancient fish scales have been found. Scientists have marvelled over the celebrated "Connecticut River Bird Tracks", which were not made by birds at all, but by the clumsy, giant lizards of the past, when West Hartford was under the sea.

As if fire had not been enough, there came the ice—vast continents of it. Great frozen sheets moved slowly down from the north, covering all of northern United States, pushing mountains before them.

The crushing blanket of ice, a hundred thousand years in the making, covered the highest hills in Connecticut. Soil and loose stones were shoved along before it. Blocks of bed rock were pried loose and added to the masses of moving debris. What was left of the bed-rock surface was polished, scratched, and gouged by the relentless mill of the glacier.

The earth from our valley is now Long Island. West Hartford lives on earth brought by the glacier from Vermont and New Hampshire. The Farmington river, which once flowed straight south into Long Island Sound, was turned to flow east and north into the Connecticut river. Boston Harbour lost *its* great river altogether!

When thousands of years later the snows melted and flowed out into the rising oceans of the world, the crushed rocks that the glaciers had ground down into vast mounds of gravel and sand, overspread the entire area. Roaming the rocks on the western edges of the Town, will reveal today the deep scratches which say, "The glacier went that way!" The ice age ended just a little while ago—10,000 years. Then the land was ready for Man. Indians.

The first men of the New World came, as we know, across the wind bridges of the Aleutians from Asia. Through the generations they moved south and east until they occupied the whole western hemisphere all the way to the southernmost tip of Patagonia and the eastern extreme of Canada. Some tribes came peacefully, exploring for new farmland or game forest; others were pushed out of their old homelands by hostile tribes; and yet other tribes plundered across the land.

There were two main groups of Indians who ended their journeys in the Connecticut valley. They were the Sequins or River Indians, and the Mattabesecs, a division of the Wappinger (Wampanoag) family. These "Easterners", for that is what their name means, were a part of the Algonquin linguistic family, speaking what is known as the "r-dialect."

It was the Sequins who met with Thomas Hooker when the white men came across the Podunk territory from Massachusetts and crossed the Great River. Sowheag was sachem, or chief, of the tribe, divided into groups led by "sagamores."

Another tribe lived in the West Hartford area, the Mattabesec, members of the Wappinger "Confederacy." The West Hartford "sachemship" was that of the Sicaogs, and their village along the Noyes (Trout Brook) river was known as Suckiauk. (The American Bureau of Ethnology places the home ground of this tribal village near West Hartford, but the early colonist wrote of it as being nearer the Great River, and taking its name "black earth" from the color of the adjacent meadows.)

Like the River Indians, the Wappinger tribes had twice been defeated in war. The Mohawks, a nation of the great Iroquois family, the most powerful of all along the eastern seaboard, held them in tribute under the threat of conquest. The dread Pequots, (whose name meant "Destroyers") had defeated them in three successive savage wars. Perhaps the fact that they had to pay "protection money" to two different tribes made the Sicaogs famous for their manufacture of "siwan" or "wampum." Probably for this reason, also, the Indians of this valley welcomed the white man, hoping he would be an ally against the Pequots and the Mohawks. Eventually he was, although it did the local tribes no great good.

How many Wappinger Indians there were in 1643, is hard to guess, perhaps some 1,750 in Connecticut and more in New York, where hundreds were killed by the Dutch about the same time that Thomas Hosmer bought a mill site for his son in western Hartford in 1679. A Wappinger tribe gave its name to Massacos near Simsbury; another to Hammonasset, and a third to Tunxis and Poquonock.

When the founding fathers emerged from the Podunk wilderness where today flourishes United Aircraft Corporation's vast factory, they came to "The Great River". Looking across it they saw, scattered in open spaces along its banks, and along the "Little River" (later to be called the Hog river, and then the Park river), "beneath tall and majestic trees, or on little cleared elevations, the smoke arising from numerous wigwams." Since the settlers arrived during the summer fishing months, it is likely that the Indians were spread throughout the area. More often they packed their wigwams closely within a fortified area. That first winter, some of the Indians stayed with the white men instead of, as they had for generations, moving back from the rivers and shutting themselves within a higher, drier stronghold.

The Hartford settlement tried to be friendly with the Indians, some of whom went with Hooker's men when they set out after the Pequots in successful revenge for the Wethersfield massacre.

In return for the defeat of their ancient Pequot enemies, the Sequins, in happy gratitude, surrendered to the English this river site. The Indians removed to the South Meadow area near the Dutch Fort, Good Hope. Sequassen, the Indian chief, had a rough time of it. He took up arms against the one-eyed chief, Tantonimo, and also against the legended Uncas, who attacked his new fort, killed seven or eight of his warriors, wounded 13 more, burned his wigwams and carried away much booty in the early summer of 1648. Shortly after he was accused of plotting against the settlers and became a fugitive. The last Indian in the area to own any of his forebear's ancestral forest land was Scipio Two Shoes. He became a servant to a Hartford Colonel Whiting, and in 1723 sold his land to his master.

By 1725 there were only about 30 or 40 Indian natives left in Hartford. They lived in South Meadow, off the charity of the settlers. The rest had been killed in battle, or had passed on naturally to the "happy hunting ground", or had departed for Farmington where they were welcomed into the Tunxis tribe. So the wigwams were gone, and their warriors with them. It is only in late October when the haze of Indian summer and the smoke of burning leaves rises that we can see the ghosts of these early red-men, slipping through the corn shocks, dancing their potent war dances. And sometimes, on a cool, crisp autumn afternoon, if you listen closely you can hear their chants, or at least catch a fleeting gleam of sunlight as it glances off an upraised tomahawk.

II. THOMAS HOOKER & CO.

THE BITTER winter of 1635 sent most of the settlers along the Great River scurrying back to Massachusetts. That is why there is a three-century argument between Windsor and Wethersfield as to which of them was the first English settlement in Connecticut. (The Dutch, remember, had already built a fort in Hartford's South Meadows in 1623.)

The argument probably can't be finished, but it is certain that the story of how the Hartford area came to be settled begins in Essex, England, whence set out a band of Puritans for America in 1632. They arrived in Quincy, Massachusetts, but within a few months moved over to Cambridge, then known as New Towne. They called themselves "Mr. Hooker's company" in expectation that their 46-year-old pastor, Thomas Hooker, would join them as soon as he could. From this group came most of the settlers who were later to desert New Towne, almost in a bunch, to make their new homes in Mr. Hooker's Connecticut colony.

Thomas Hooker was among the noblest of all the New England Puritans. Because of his preaching that within the people lay the power to govern themselves, and because of the constitution to which he gave the breath of life, Hartford has been thought of by many historians as the birthplace of American democracy. Hooker was born to a plain family in Leicestershire, England, about the time the English sea-dogs were defeating the Spanish armada and launching the British empire. He worked his way through school waiting on tables, and went on through undergraduate and graduate school at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, the "mere nursery of Puritanism."

When he left college, Thomas Hooker went to a tiny country parish in Surrey, and quickly became known as an outstanding preacher. The people were compelled by law to keep and pay a Church of England pastor. But they were not, at that time, forced to listen to him preach. So they would hire a man with different and more liberal ideas and pay him with donations. In 1626, Hooker became such a "lecturer," preaching on Market days and Sunday afternoons. As his fame increased, so unfortunately did the power of stern Archbishop Laud, who was dead set against the Puritan innovation of "lecturers". Soon Hooker was driven out of England. He fled to Holland and four years later returned to England before sailing to America, after a very narrow escape from the king's officers. They would have cropped his ears and slit his nostrils.

Aboard ship with him were two men who were to be his closest friends, John Haynes, "a gentleman", and governor of both Massachusetts and later Connecticut; and Samuel Stone, who was much like Thomas Hooker in thought and deed. Aboard also

was John Mather. When they landed, Mather and Hooker were ordained into the new Puritan church.

The new minister had been at New Towne but seven months when the town's inhabitants petitioned for leave to explore for "an enlargement or a removal". After looking about in the Agawam and Merrimac regions, a party cruised down and around to Connecticut without permission. They found its meadows to their liking, and the distance from Massachusetts agreeable. Hooker's group was the first to move out of the Bay colony. They wanted to leave because the towns were too crowded to attract new settlers in search of land. The Puritans, they decided, would be wise to settle up Connecticut before more English did. In Hooker's case there was another powerful force. His stature in the colony was growing too fast for the other leaders to accept gracefully, and it was more comfortable for him to keep moving.

The departure of "Mr. Hooker's Company" was the first sign of the popular revolt against the high-handedness of many Puritan leaders. It also had the distinction of being the first of the many great westward migrations within America. Six men, forerunners of the Hooker company, made the trip fom New Towne to Suckiaug in 1634. Their journey had a profound effect upon American history, but their names are buried in their legend.

The following year, in October, 1635, some sixty people followed John Steel, a Hooker lieutenant, across the Great Trail to Hartford. They arrived with their cows, horses and swine after a "tedious and difficult journey," probably a month before another party, which came from Dorchester, arrived at Windsor. The next spring, Thomas Hooker brought the remainder of his congregation, about one hundred, across the Connecticut Path and the deserted New Towne changed its name to Cambridge. In 1637, the Hartford settlement was officially named for the Rev. Samuel Stone's birthplace, the Puritan stronghold of Hertford, just north of London. If Hartford had, instead, been named after Hooker's tiny birthplace, it would today be Marfield, Connecticut.

Governor Winthrop's record reports that when Mr. Hooker and most of his congregation went to Connecticut, his wife was carried in a horse litter. They drove "one hundred and sixty cattle, and fed of their milk by the way." The party was three weeks on the way, traveling five to six miles a day, resting on the Sabbath.

In 1637 with 800 settlers here, the first General Court or assembly in Connecticut was held, and resolved promptly that "there shalbe an offensive warr agt the Pequoitt". With the "Pequiott" thoroughly butchered and their threat to the colony erased, the settlers turned to the business of setting up their own government, and on January 14, 1639, the "Fundamental Orders" were adopted. These orders were very similar to the charter government of the Massachusetts Bay colony, but were much more liberal in their law and spirit. It is said that Connecticut's legendary "steady habits" date from this period when the plain people were first given some voice in their government.

It was the Fundamental Orders that gave us our state name, too. Under this document, adopted by Windsor and Wethersfield along with Hartford, the towns formed themselves as "one publike State or Commonwealth". The State having no name, other than their indication as "The Three Towns upon the River Connecticut", people gradually began calling the whole region Connecticut. The name Connecticut is a free spelling of an Indian word for "long estuary". Since an estuary indicates tide ebbing and flowing, the Indians were actually referring only to the lower part of the river. However, Connecticut is often translated as "Long River". Actually there was no middle "c" in the Indian word, and so it appears that some "half-wise town-clerk" added it, trying to relate it to the English word "connect".

Hartford prospered and grew, despite occasional epidemics such as the one of 1647 which carried off Thomas Hooker, "The Light of the Western Churches". By 1640, there were 116 houses; but up until the Revolution, Hartford was smaller than Windsor or Farmington.

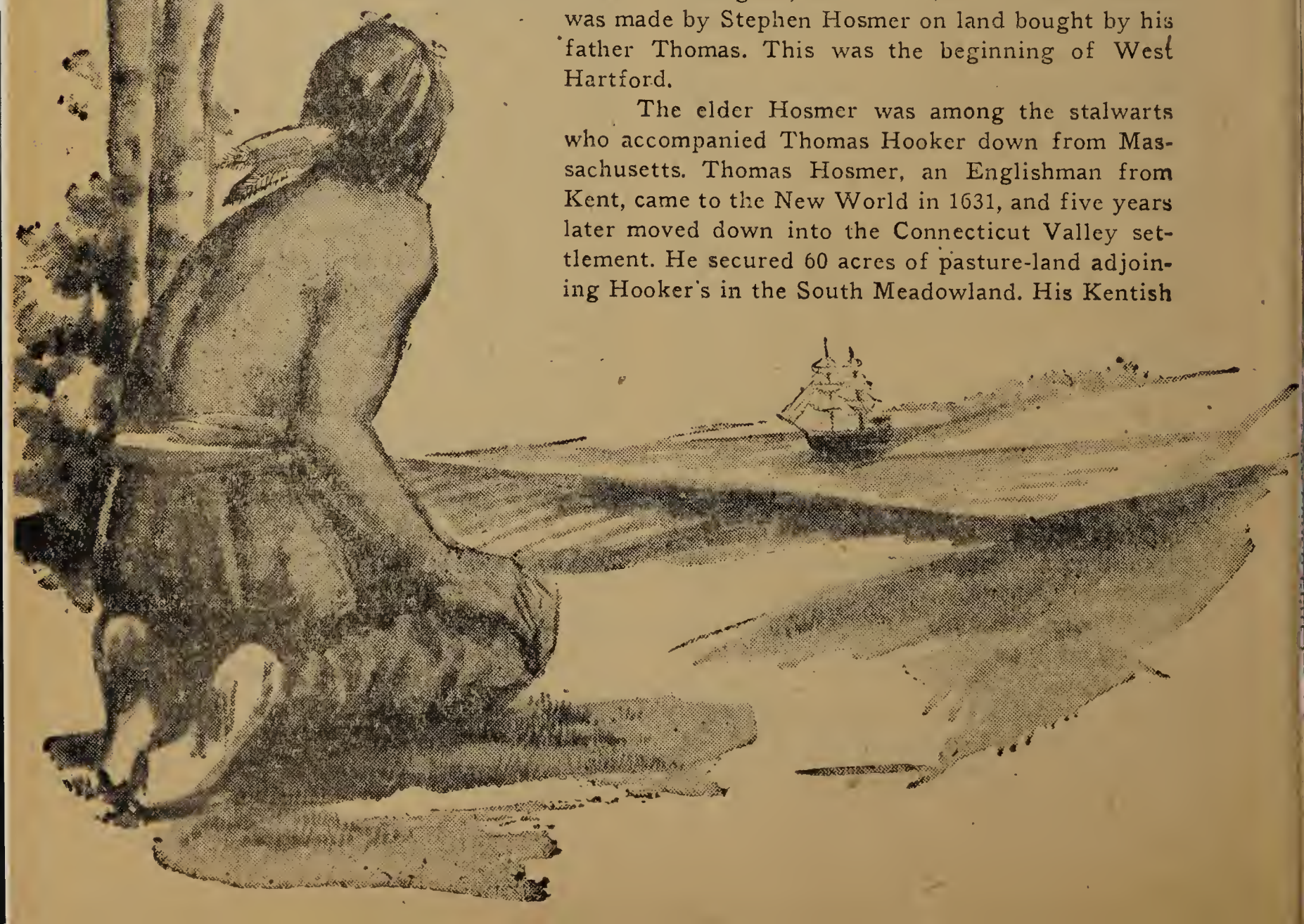
The boundaries of Hooker's plantation were "from the Great River on the east, the whole breadth to run into the wilderness towards the west full six miles, which is to the

place where the Hartford and Farmington bounds meet". The confusing thing of that description is that Mountain Road, which was the original western boundary of the Town, is just under five miles from the river. Four Mile Road in modern West Hartford marks that distance from the Great River, and Albany Place is the old five-mile marker. The reason for the "short boundary" is that the grant measured six miles into the wilderness at the northern and southern extremities. The long curve of the river makes a line from the western edges of the north and south bounds only a scant five miles in the middle. Later, because the farmers on Selden Hill and Avon Mountain found it more convenient to attend church in the West Division center, the boundary was moved to the top of the mountain.

The West Division was bounded on the east by Quaker Lane, and the land between Quaker Lane and Prospect Street was set aside by the Hartford Town fathers in 1672 to be "forever" a long, wide common. While this land has since been turned from its original design, a glance on the map will show a series of parks from Goodwin Park through Elizabeth Park to Beachland Park that curiously enough falls in this area.

As the town grew, then, the proprietors decided to divide up the western tract. They met in 1672 for that purpose. The land in the center of the tract was a mile and a half wide—the distance between Quaker Lane and Mountain Road, and sections running east and west were laid out for the entire distance. In the southern part of the district, however, the sections were laid out in tiers north to south. Then the lots were assigned, and in 1679, the first settlement was made by Stephen Hosmer on land bought by his father Thomas. This was the beginning of West Hartford.

The elder Hosmer was among the stalwarts who accompanied Thomas Hooker down from Massachusetts. Thomas Hosmer, an Englishman from Kent, came to the New World in 1631, and five years later moved down into the Connecticut Valley settlement. He secured 60 acres of pasture-land adjoining Hooker's in the South Meadowland. His Kentish



heritage had groomed him well for farming, and soon he was one of the largest land-owners and traders along the Great River, owning property as far south as Middletown.

An acknowledged leader in the village of Hartford, in his will he commanded his descendants that "if any of my children shall bring up their children to learning so as to make them fitt for publick service, to each grandchild I doe bequeath ten pounds apiece."

As the seventeenth century wore on, Thomas Hosmer was attracted to the possibilities in the West Division, and in February of 1679 he sold all his acreage on the east side of the river and bought his first 90-acre piece in West Hartford. It was a narrow strip, north of the center, running from the Commons (the line of Quaker Lane) to the Farmington Bounds (which was at that time Mountain Street.) To this strip he added until he had a total of 300 acres or more.

Near where North Main Street now crosses Trout Brook, Thomas Hosmer built a crude dam and a grist mill for his son, Stephen. This became the first dwelling and the first place of business in West Hartford. In those days when there was a shortage of "hard cash", it was common to accept payment in "kind". Preachers and school-teachers were frequently paid in fire-wood; and Thomas Hosmer found that often when he sold a lot, his payment was at least partially, in grain. A gristmill was then most logical.

Although Stephen Hosmer was 34 years old when he became the "father of West Hartford", he did not actually play a key role in the early development of the town. He was elected a freeman or town counselor for four different terms in Hartford; but he possessed little of the acquisitiveness of his father. Where Thomas acquired land, Stephen sold his; and within a very short time the gristmill passed into other hands. When his father died, Stephen moved back to Hartford with his wife, Hannah Bushnell. Five years later he disposed of most of his father's remaining West Division acres. The new owners were named Hooker, Whiting, Stone, Spencer, and White, and the land they bought extended from the Commons "west to the brook".

By 1710, when the first petition was made for a separate West Division parish, there was no Hosmer amongst the petitioners. Nor, three years later, when the separate church was established, was there a Hosmer represented.

But the millsite was already a landmark, destined to hold its identity through the 275 or more years that have passed since Thomas Hosmer, with rare discernment picked it as the logical place to start a new community.

One Hosmer did return to West Hartford for a short time. He was Stephen's grandson and namesake. Here he married Deliverance Graves, and the Congregational Church birth records tell of their eighth child, a son born in 1736 and named Titus.

Titus grew up in West Hartford, and went to Yale. Admitted to the bar, he set up practice in Middletown where a number of his Hosmer relatives had previously settled.

For five crucial years, from 1773-1778, Titus served in the General Assembly. As speaker of the house in 1777 he pounded the rostrum, a big, bold, popular figure, and insisted upon vigorous measures against England. He was selected as an alternate to the Continental Congress, and later as a member. He had signed his bold signature "Titus Hosmer" at the bottom of the Articles of Confederation when America was born. A "sudden fever" took him three years later, at 44.

The great Hosmer knew Connecticut as few could. He had searched its hills for sulphur in 1775 as a member of a legislative committee commissioned to help supply military material. He was on the committee to "work the lead mine in Middletown and refine the ore." July 4, 1776, found Hosmer arranging with General Washington to have a colonial regiment raised in the Great River valley. (Quick, logical arguments made him a great lawyer. Broad knowledge and deep understanding made him a great judge. Noah Webster ranked Titus one of the "three mighties" of Connecticut jurisprudence in the founding days of the republic.)

To his eldest son, Stephen Titus Hosmer, went his legal talent, elevating him to Chief Justice of Connecticut for 18 years. But Titus might well have gone beyond his son's fame had he lived; Congress had just

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appointed him one of three judges of a court of appeals for maritime cases, and he was being mentioned for Governor of Connecticut at the time of his sudden death.

Shortly after the first Stephen Hosmer moved out from the city to take advantage of the water-power along the Noyes River (Trout Brook), John Merrill bought a good part of the land north of the mill, all the way to Albany Avenue, and slowly the other pioneers moved in, Lamrock Flowers in 1686, Joseph Gillett in 1694, Samuel Sedgewick a year later, and Isaac Hinsdale in 1697. The land was fertile and more and more souls drifted west; by 1710 there were in West Hartford's 22 square miles, 164 people who petitioned for a separate church.

The memory of many of these early settlers lives today in the names of our streets, and schools. One section in the extreme northern part of West Hartford was assigned in 1674 to Caleb Standly. The name was changed to Stanley over the years just as Bracey became Brace and Braman, Brennan. The Whitmans— the Deacon, his son "Mr." John, and his daughter, Sarah Whitman Hooker, were all living along North Main Street long before the Revolution. The old home still standing at 208 North Main was built by "Mr." John for his bride, Anne Skinner of Bloomfield, in 1764. John built his handsome sturdy salt box with a low second story on the front, and a long sloping roof in the rear that came down to the first floor in order to escape the heavy tax on two, storey houses.

Other original settlers gave their names to other sections. Webster Heights takes its name from the old Webster farm of Noah's grandfather John, who was one of the 1713 petitioners for a separate parish. Henry Talcott, for whom the school was named, was born in the Talcott house in Elmwood in 1815; he was descended from John Tailecot of Braintree, England, who came to America and then Hartford with Thomas Hooker.

The first Selden of Selden Hill came from East Haddam around 1793. Samuel Whiting married one of the Haynes daughters and built the Whiting home on land his wife's family had acquired in 1674. The petition of 1710 bore other names now used to identify streets: Arnold, Steel, Flagg, Wells, Goodman, Bishop, Caldwell and Gillette.

With the establishment of its own church the Town got its first identity. The years were to see it grow, its character develop. For now it was on the map in the brave New World, awaiting the future confidently.

III. THE GOOD BLACK EARTH

TO THE new settlers, Nature's bounty exceeded all dreams of the New World. Flights of the tender passenger pigeon darkened the skies; turkeys were so plentiful that their white meat could be eaten like bread. In waters along the coast, twenty-five pound lobsters were easily caught; and oysters which an English novelist was to describe "as big as babies". The Great river harbored sturgeon nine-foot long. The fields were covered with wild strawberries; of which Roger Williams wrote, "God could have made, but never did, a better berry." Grapes were in profusion. So rich a garden was America that sailors could smell her fragrance a full day before sighting her jutting land.

An early Hartford historian, *Scaevas*, wrote that the settlers found ground nuts, artichokes, wild leeks, onions, garlic, turnips, wild peas, plantain, radish, and "other succulent roots", all growing "spontaneously"!

Hardly a medicinal vegetable of common use was missing. *Scaevas* (his real name was Isaac William Stuart) listed seventeen including: pennyroyal, ginseng, bloodroot, spikenard, sarsaparilla, licorice root and "other common ones". One familiar and romantic medicinal root is not mentioned: the mandrake, whose large, strangely forked root, resembling a man's body, has from time immemorial promoted many superstitions. In America, the May Apple was known as the mandrake root. Its fruit was considered edible, and its poisonous rootstalk yields the powerful drug podophyllin. Irascible John Josselyn, who wrote two lively accounts of his visits to New England, and a systematic report on New England botany, praised local tobacco, despite the fact that New Englanders had not yet learned the proper way to cure it. He said: "It is sown in April upon a bed of rich mold sifted. They make a bed about three yards long or more according to the ground they intend to plant, and a yard and a half over; this they tread down hard, then they sow their seed upon it as thick as may be, and sift fine earth upon it, then tread it down again, as hard as they can. When it hath gotten four or six leaves, they remove it into the planting ground; when it begins to bud towards flowering, they crop off the top, for the flower draws away the strength of the leaf. For the rest I refer you to the planter, not being willing to discover their mysteries. The Indians of New England use a small round leafed tobacco, called, by them or the fishermen, 'poke'. It is odious to the English".

Not all local tobacco was odious to our forebears, however, because it has been written of tobacco: "Its virtues are these. It helps digestion, the gout, the toothache, prevents infection by scents; it heats the cold, and cools them that sweat, feedeth the hungry, spent spirits restoreth, purgeth the stomach, killeth nits and lice;

the juice of the green leaf healeth green wounds, although poisoned; the syrup for many diseases, the smoke for the phthisic, cough of the lungs, distillations of rheum, and all diseases of a cold and moist cause".

And yet, "taken immoderately", Josselyn warns, "it drieth the body, inflameth the blood, hurteth the brain, weakens the eyes and the sinews". And so the local law prohibited any under twenty from taking the weed. This, from earliest days, was West Hartford's "money crop".

The early staple was, of course, corn. Wheat was subject to the blast, whilst "the abundant increase of corn", wrote Francis Higginson, "proves this country to be a wonderment . . . God blessed husbandry in this land. There is not such great and plentiful ears of corn, I suppose, anywhere else to be found but in this country (New England). Little children here by setting of corn may earn much more than their own maintenance".

Aside from the famous onions of Wethersfield, root crops, such as potatoes, carrots, and turnips, were not very highly esteemed. Indeed, the usually progressive and generally well-educated Yale president Ezra Stiles considered potatoes usable principally as cattle food. One of the key items which had to be regularly hauled was milk, the dairy industry having been on the increase all through the 19th century.

There was barley, rye, oats, and peas; and beans to go with the corn; and hemp and flax from which the settlers made their clothes and cordage. Radishes, reports *Scaevas*, as big as a man's arm, and vine apples or squash. And pumpkins; Pompions—or pumpkins—were the ancient New England standing dish. Each family had no trouble growing its own garden vegetables.

While the children harvested nuts from the groves adjoining the farm, father would go hunting for wild game in rich abundance. Deer, moose, bear, turkey, partridge, and water fowl "in great variety". "What a lure to deglutition and digestion", exclaims the old journalist. And there was the trapping of otter, beaver, fox, raccoon, mink, and muskrat. The Dutch at the fort reported purchasing 10,000 skins a year from settlers and Indians.

These first families who moved out to West Division probably didn't have a plow amongst them. Like most pioneers, they fell to tearing up the bushy lands in Indian style with bare hands and hoes. Much of the farmland was burned off. Carts there were, and teams of lean horses and oxen.

Cattle breeding began early in the town's history, and in the eighteenth century there was even a committee appointed to "view the Bulls and Calves". Goats and hogs and sheep were plentiful. (A later report says that in 1838 there were 3,000 sheep in the West division.)

"Connecticut pork" became known throughout the colonies for its nourishing cheapness, Indian corn and mast from the oak and beech trees of our forest contributed to producing a superior pork. Grazing became more and more profitable and land quickly changed from tillage to grazing throughout the state. Many fortunes were made during the Civil War, particularly in supplying meat to the troops.

The last week in July, 1766, was sticky and hot. Young Nathaniel Hooker, the minister, hadn't felt well all week. As Sunday approached he chose for the subject of his sermon the harvest. Despite the hurried preparation he gave his 40-minute message, it meant so much in the daily lives of his people, that the harvest sermon achieved a local immortality:

"The providence of God has ordered this work . . . in a sultry season of the year. The beasts in their pastures forsake their food and seek shelter from the noon-tide heat in any shade that presents. . . The fowls skulk from the burning air to some neighboring hedge and indulge their indolence; while man is called forth to gather his bread. If the season be lost, pale famine stares him in the face."

There was human symbolism, the youthful minister said, in the fact that the sun and rain were as kind to the weeds as they were to the wheat. Not until the final harvest of the Judgment was the chaff to be separated. Therefore, he told his attentive listeners, they should cultivate the good in them so it would be multiplied a hundredfold.

It is doubtful that the young minis-

ter would himself have enjoyed the farmer's lot, although he felt that God had indeed taken a special providence in the Connecticut Valley, protecting it against dearth, even if He neglected to "order so warm and steady a covering of snow as you at times were ready to wish". But he argued that the farmer had a better prospect of feeling the "power and kindness of God" than the warrior who depends on his troops, the seaman who relies on his ship and crew, the craftsmen who live by their "art and contrivance".

For the farmer in that unscientific day, he concluded "there is none but God to look to; the whole village can't raise a cloud, nor can the united power of all mankind unstop the bottles of heaven".

When a volcano erupted on the Island of Bali in 1815, it was responsible for an amazing and a disastrous 1816 for the farmers of West Hartford—and for all New England!

The eruption was one of the greatest in history, taking 56,000 lives, and blowing such clouds of dust into the stratosphere that they dimmed the sun like a great cosmic umbrella. This caused the Year of the Two Winters and the year 1816 was known to our great grandparents as "Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death".

On May 15th, the people of West Hartford awakened to an unnatural silence. Not a bird song could be heard. And when they looked out their windows, the ground was covered with frost.

Come June 6 and men still wore their great coats outside, and kept fires burning within. On July 4 it snowed "and then got cold". All through the summer months the temperature changed from sweltering hot one day to freezing cold the next. Nor was

West and the first lot of apples were sold. They brought from $1.50 to $3.50 a barrel at auction. They sold 60 of the barrels; the rest brought only a dollar a barrel in Mobile. The boys also had some chestnuts which they sold for $3 a bushel, cabbages for fourteen cents a head, and for $8 a barrel potatoes. The Captain of the ship charged them $30 each for fares and freight; between them they cleared a hundred dollars.

About the same age as the Crane and Sedgwick boys was Edward Stanley, descendant of the Standley who drew the Buena Vista "great lot" back in 1674. It was his rolling acres that later became the West Hartford golf course. Down the long slope of his timberland flashing skiers today sweep to the old bottom meadows. But a hundred years ago, fine Devonshire cattle and pedigreed horses were bred here. Both he and his son were to be remembered not only for their prosperous farm and civic contributions during the early history of the town, but also for the fleet pairs these horse-loving farmers hitched to their wagons and shays.

The most famous horse, by far, in West Hartford history, was "Thomas Jefferson", owned by William Smith, who at Philadelphia's grand Centennial Fair won a prize as "The Handsomest Horse in the World". When President Ulysses S. Grant came to Farmington to visit his daughter at Miss Porter's School he was driven behind "Thomas Jefferson" from the Hartford railroad station out to the little village. So delighted was he in the famed horse's sheen, bearing, and gait that he offered $10,000 for him.

This tempting offer Owner William Brown Smith declined. His horse won that much in a single day some time later in Buffalo. "Thomas Jefferson" stayed at Sunset Farm, between races, until he died and was buried at the Charter Oak Track.

His one-time pasture, Sunset Farm, lying along the eastern slope of Talcott mountain, is now a residential area of cooperatively owned roads, ponds, and pools, but had its beginning as a farm-site. An unknown pioneer built a mill along the Trout Brook running out of Sunset Farm, and Solomon Brace bought it in 1793. The Braces kept the property for three quarters of a century until the day William Smith, a descendant of the Puritan divine, John Cotton, bought it from him. Mr. Smith was a former tailor in Hartford but his interest in horses had drawn him into the grain business. He acquired the young stallion, "Thomas Jefferson", and needing pasturage, bought Sunset Farm. The Smiths did not live on the farm, but since the farm on the Talcott slopes was visible in the sunset shadows from their Hartford home, Mrs. Smith suggested its name.

Just after Smith purchased the land the earthen dam of the reservoir broke and flooded the pastures of West Hartford. Sunset Farm lost its mills, which were never rebuilt. Instead, farm buildings and a fancy coop for game birds were erected. These game cocks were exported to many parts of the world, Cuba being a regular purchaser.

The story of Sunset Farm is far more than farming. Smith's wife, Virginia Thrall, founded the Connecticut Children's Aid Society, and the Newington Home for Crippled Children. The buildings on Sunset Farm became summer haven for scores of impoverished mothers and children.

"Thomas Jefferson" raced at the Charter Oak race track in West Hartford, built in the 70s by Burdette Loomis. The Hartford track, on Albany Avenue, was a mile and a quarter; Loomis decided Hartford should have a mile track as well.

About that time Morgan Bulkeley returned to Hartford from Brooklyn where he had been a merchant. Here he became a banker, an insurance president, mayor, governor, U. S. Senator, first president of the National Baseball League, and president of the National Trotting Association. Loomis, Bulkeley and others put Hartford on the "Grand Circuit" and the country's finest pacers and trotters came to Charter Oak where the late fall "Overcoat Meet" chilled Virginia visitors. It was rough at times, too, and was once labeled "The Murder Meeting".

In the mid 1930s the great park, which had seen crowds of 50,000, became idle. Not even Agricultural Fairs could make it pay. For a while there were rumors that Henry Ford was buying the land to put up a tin lizzie factory. Nothing came of it. The owners

wanted to give the land to the town of West Hartford as a public park, but the Town declined.

Two racing fans decided to buy the track and put West Hartford back on the circuit. But one of them was running for Mayor of Hartford and he felt the publicity of association with a race track right before election time would hobble him at the polls. He was elected Mayor, but before he could finish the Charter Oak deal, he suddenly died. Soon after the Chase National Bank sold the park. "Thomas Jefferson's" headstone was removed to Sunset Farm; now the Pratt & Whitney small tool plant stands where the handsomest horse in the world once brought cheers as he flashed across a winner.

Twined with the story of agriculture in West Hartford have been the Patrons of Husbandry. On Lincoln's birthday, 1887, West Hartford Grange 53 was founded. It has been meeting twice a month ever since.

The local chapter began at a time when the Town was a granary for the area, in those post-Civil War days when agrarian discontent expressed itself first in a group organized by Oliver Hudson Kelley. He was a roving Boston newspaperman and telegrapher, who aspired to convert farmers to his idea of an association. The full title he conceived was "The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry". Fortunately, in addition to being an earnest speaker of boundless energy, he had a sense of humor. With these attributes he charmed the farmers into coming along. Little was said about the political potential of such a group. This was social and intellectual, with more than a dash of the ancient mysteries that appealed to these lonely men for excitement and color.

The Grangers were the first effective force to challenge the monopolistic heavy hand of the railroads; and thirty-two state legislatures bowed before their demands for railroad legislation. They took pride in admitting women to full membership; and they began co-operatives that worried every merchant but Montgomery Ward. Ward, who travelled for Marshall Field, saw in the farmers' situation a real opportunity for Ward himself to set up his own "co-operative" eliminating the hated middle-man by introducing a new middle-man, the mail catalogue.

J. H. Hale came over from Glastonbury, and organized the West Hartford Grange with 32 charter men and women. The village blacksmith, Timothy Sedgwick, was first Master. Grange 58 has made its influence felt on the community. Its campaigns for better roads, better mail delivery, brought about real improvements. In the move in the '20s to take West Hartford back into Hartford, the Grange led the fight against it. A few years later it helped raise the money for the Noah Webster Library. Its exhibits were always among the finest at annual fairs at Charter Oak Park.

As West Hartford changed so did the Grange membership. Its fraternal aspects took dominance, though the thread of Biblical injunction and agricultural lore still runs through the ritual by which new officers are initiated, and members are moved up through seven solemn degrees. But white collars have replaced blue denims, and the 75 to 100 members present at an evening meeting, as they march back and forth in their colorful sashes "from station to station", are not marching back and forth from furrow to furrow behind a plow during the day.

IV. YANKEE EXODUS

THE year of the Two Winters caused whole New England villages to pull up and head west. It was, in many cases, the straw that broke the Yankees' back. The pre-historic glaciers had much to do with the westward movement because farmers got tired of turning up a new crop of rocks after each spring thaw. An old joke said

that more man hours went into the building of the stone walls of New England than went into the construction of the Great Wall of China.

The rocky nature of the land, the cold of winters, the lack of new land fit for plowing for succeeding generations, high taxes, religious differences, and an unconquerable urge for greater personal freedom all contributed to the westward migration. There was the old French scholar who thought that the turning of the earth on its axis made men chase after its rotation just as squirrels in a cage. But the old-time New England farmer was too practical to be carried away by that sort of fiddle-faddle. The ambitious, frugal Yankee spread out over virtually the entire world, *not* because he was a squirrel in a cage, but because he was looking for more land of opportunity. Sometimes it was because he felt an urge to civilize the more barbaric regions of his own country. Sam Wyllys of the West Division was treasurer of the Susquehanna Company, whose articles of association spell out the main Yankee reason for migration: "to spread Christianity and also to promote our own Temporal Interest." This interest, for some West Division families, lay in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. To Lennox went settlers from West Hartford and Wallingford, and Stockbridge was settled by Judge Theodore Sedgwick, the West Hartford born statesman who rose to represent the Commonwealth in the United States Senate. He defended the first run-away slave tried in Boston, and the decision in this case made slavery "forever impossible in Massachusetts."

The next lure was Vermont, which was almost completely settled by people from Connecticut. When Connecticut's Ethan Allen and his brothers organized the Onion River Land Company there just before the Revolution, Connecticut settlers flowed in a continuous stream. However, West Hartford's esteemed pastor, the Rev. Nathan Perkins, who traveled through Vermont shortly after Allen's death, wrote in his journal: "All the men of learning (are) deists in this State . . . arrived at Onion-River Falls and passed by Ethan Allyn's grave. An awful Infidel, one of the wickedest men that ever walked this guilty globe, I stopped and looked at his grave with a pious horror."

As in their Pennsylvania adventures, the Connecticut pioneers in Vermont, found themselves in the midst of small-scale wars over land titles. But still they flowed in. Great Barrington was a Hartford inspired Town in the Berkshire Hills. The surge next turned into upstate New York until two-thirds of the population of that large area was of Connecticut and Massachusetts birth. This came during the period called the "Genesee Fever" when 67,000 Nutmeggers moved into that fertile valley. West Division lost some of its more ambitious citizens. Benjamin Burr of West Hartford opened the first glove factory in what was to become the greatest center of the industry in America, Gloversville. The Flagg brothers were "West Hartford boys" who went to Yonkers and became "noble men", according to a local mid-Victorian biographer who described the West Hartford born New York merchant F. Cosset as "a man of wealth and great benevolence." West Hartford furnished a lieutenant-governor of early New York in Benjamin Woodruff, as well as several Congressmen. Ebenezer Belden helped found the first daily newspaper in the United States—the New York City *Advertiser* begun by Generals Schuyler and Alexander Hamilton. Noah Webster was the editor, Belden, the printer. A famous man in his time was Harry Croswell, born in West Hartford, in 1778. He studied with Pastor Perkins and later with Noah Webster. His family later moved to Catskill, New York, where at the age of 22, Harry became editor of the *Catskill Packet*.

Two years later Croswell felt that Hudson's Republican newspaper, *The Bee*, needed an opponent. In 1802, he founded an opposition sheet, the Federalist *Balance*. The bitterness of his attack soon landed the tall, handsome youth in a libel suit. His party friends brought General Alexander Hamilton to plead his defense.

Later he moved to Albany and involved himself in another libel suit. But politics and newspapers were not for him. Croswell became an Episcopal minister and after serving a year in the adopted home city, Hudson, New York, he returned in 1815 to

Connecticut and for 43 years was minister at Trinity Church, New Haven.

Croswell was a man of many parts. Rising at four, he spent the day ministering to the spiritual and often the temporal needs of his flock. At night, he still found time to write his perceptive remarks in his 5,000 page diary, a work still closed to the public because of its extreme frankness. He was a peppery old gent, and yet had a deep and abiding humility.

In 1855, he returned to West Hartford to preach the consecration service at the new St. James's Church. His greatest satisfaction in life were the 2,553 baptisms and the 837 marriages he had performed.

In 1796, the Susquehanna Company was organized in the Hartford area. One writer called these men a "group of high-powered real estate operators". They signed up eight hundred shareholders for a Pennsylvania venture, but they quickly turned their eyes farther West. They came down with a bad case of "Ohio Fever". The spill of Nutmeggers into Ohio would almost seem to have left the home state bare. Marietta, Ohio, a typical Connecticut town, except for the Latin names of its principal streets, was settled by two groups. First came a company of settlers from Danvers, Massachusetts, followed by another group from Hartford.

West Hartford's Revolutionary War heroes, Ezekial Williams and Thomas Bull, settled in Bath, Ohio; Uriel Holmes and Ephraim Root were agents for Moses Cleaveland's Connecticut Land Company. And from New York, Pennsylvania, western Massachusetts and Vermont came pioneers whose parents had come from Connecticut.

At about the same time Connecticut families were colonizing Midway in Georgia. Half way between Savannah and Brunswick on the coastal highway down to Florida, two white New England churches were built, whose unfamiliar sight startles tourists.

Even before this, in 1773, a group of 200 Nutmeg State citizens moved into the Yazoo tract along the Mississippi, followed the next year by 400 Connecticut families. They settled near Natchez, and in time became devoted Southerners whose children 90 years later would take up arms against their Connecticut cousins in the Civil War

While the brave souls are countless who set out from West Hartford village to settle the West, the names and tales of a few have come down. To Illinois went Albigence Scarborough, deacon of the Congregational Church, and a Town leader. For six weeks he travelled west on his mule. He found a fertile river valley with the same hard maples of Connecticut. These broad inviting lands along the Mississippi were to him the end of the trail, so he came back to get his wife Electra and their children.

Another Connecticut man helped the Scarboroughs lay out a model town and named it Payson after a noted Yankee parson. To this new village came many of the Scarborough's old neighbors. Moses Spencer and his family left their farm where LeMay Street and Farmington Avenue now meet. Such former West Hartford names as Charles Whitman, Cyrus Butler, his brother Wells, Martin Seymour will still be found on the rural mailboxes around Payson. The white church spire, the colonial architecture, the broad common make today's Payson a picturesque New England town in Illinois.

Albigence Scarborough was a deeply religious man and twenty per cent of all the money paid in for land in his new town was set aside to start a seminary. There his daughter, Miss Lizzie, taught the farm children, some who walked as much as ten miles a day to school and back. After her father died, Miss Lizzie lived alone in the big family house, carrying on the tradition of great generosity to the church and the community.

Farmer Scarborough imported more than New England culture and Fundamentalism. He brought Payson a tremendous stone windmill to grind the community's first flour. He planted an apple orchard, introduced choice peach trees from New Jersey, and began the growing of Concord grapes. And from Connecticut, he brought the architecture for a lovely church and the Scarborough home, now the Congregational parsonage. Around the common, throughout the little white weather-board village, shading the two grocery stores, the one hardware store, the single restaurant and the three churches, stand today the descendants of the elm and pine seedlings for which the early settlers had sent home to West Hartford.

A few years later our mid-Victorian memoralist tells us of the "West Hartford Girl" Sophia Porter, who married James R. Ray, "a wealthy, noted philanthropist of Indiana". Another West Hartford contribution to the Hoosier State was the Woodford family, who moved to Indiana shortly after the Civil War. Clark Keeney Woodford was the aunt of Alexander Keeney, who once owned —the farm that is now Fernridge Park.

The story of another West Hartford traveller, Joseph Bishop, epitomizes the saga of the Yankee pioneer.' In the late 1830's, Joseph Bishop, a restless young fellow, the last in a family of fifteen, set out with his bride Zerviah, and an adventurous nephew, Randolph Woodford, in a covered wagon loaded with Seth Thomas clocks. They were bound for the West. In land-booming central Illinois, they ran into keen disappointment, a local law prohibited their assembling and selling their "foreign" clocks. Young Joe Bishop was not stumped. He found himself a successful young lawyer. "Go ahead and put your clocks together" was his counsel. "The State of Illinois will sue you and I'll defend you."

On the suit of defending Bishop, the young lawyer won. He had a habit of winning. And he had a reputation already for helping the under-dog, the stranger, the little fellow. During the six years, this young attorney had spent in New Salem, a few miles from the Town of Payson, Illinois, he worked as a store clerk during the day, but studied law at night. There he had felt the first stirring of the political ambition that was to take him to Springfield and his brief battle in defense of Joe Bishop. He went on to Washington, to fight a long battle to save the Union. That young lawyer was Abraham Lincoln.

Thanks to Lincoln's wit and ability, the Bishops assembled and sold their clocks at good prices. They returned to West Hartford with the profits, and a young daughter, Lucia Jane. But farm life didn't appeal to Bishop. He liked the zest of business. There was a tavern and hotel on the northwest corner of Albany Turnpike and Main Street. The Bishops bought it and converted it into their home. During the buying season, Bishop travelled the length of the valley buying tobacco from the local farmers, including some in West Hartford.

In 1858, he built a warehouse just east of "Bishop's Corner" where the farmers sold their tobacco crop. The warehouse is now a wayside furniture store. Joe and Zerviah Bishop, and nephew Randolph Woodford, were Yankees, who went west but did not stay. They were the exceptions because most of the pioneers never saw their West Hartford homes again. If they moved, they moved farther west. From the Noyes River in Connecticut, all the way out to the Columbia River in the northwest, today there are families who can trace their past back across the three thousand miles to Yankee beginnings in West Hartford.

One group, however, did return from the West. There was a Bishop who went to California during Gold Rush days of 1849, when he was twenty-eight. Seth Woodford Bishop was one of a hundred thousand men who stampeded into the gold fields, surviving the perilous voyage around the Horn. He did not strike any bonanzas, but apparently made more than the average of an ounce a day (about $16.00) for some of the ten years he stayed. When he left, more than a half billion in gold had been taken out, but the day of the prospector and the lucky strike were vanishing. Disappointments were many and the disillusions were described in letters sent home by pony express and clipper ship.

"Were I located in a good business either for myself or an obliging patron", wrote one homesick miner, "I would never leave the good old City of Hartford for California with my present knowledge of things here". Another reported that "I was in the mines for about five weeks, and we did not average but four dollars a day. The company is all split up, and some have gone one way and some another. . . The mines are not what they were cracked up to be. . . Where one does well, there are thousands who do not make expenses. . . There's plenty of gold here, but it's the hardest work I ever did".

A third young man from these parts went into partnership in the painting business, and made $63 in the first two-thirds of a day's work. This caused the *Hartford Courant* to comment that "painting is a better business in California than gold-digging".

Eggs that cost twenty cents a dozen in West Hartford would bring three dollars in California. A pound of sugar, tea or coffee sold for four dollars. Wooden and tin Connecticut-made bowls went for as much as $7.50 apiece in the gold fields. And one Yankee trader who for some inexplicable reason loaded a ship with baby cradles for California in '48, arrived in port just in time to sell them at a fabulous profit. Eager miners bought them, took them to their "diggins" and used them as rockers to pan the gold out of the river beds and streams.

A discouraged prospector from Hartford complained that "law and order is not to be found . . . to seek re-dress for any grievance in our so-called court of justice would be empty or pick the pockets of a poor man".

Still these 'Forty-niners rushed west, across the plains, by sea, or through the jungles. In addition to Seth Bishop, there was a second West Hartford man, Thomas Alden. Perhaps it was a *Courant* story of the Indians selling gold to the white men for fifty cents an ounce, or the story in the January 27th issue of finding twenty-five pound lumps of gold lying around the country-side that sent young Thomas out "to see the elephant" as it was sometimes called. He left his family's farm along Albany Turnpike (where St. Mary's Home is now located), and did not come back.

Two stories of West Hartford citizens who later went into the great world and made unusual mark have been handed down. A bulky package left West Hartford for Aintab, Turkey, almost every Christmas for the first thirty years of the 20th century. The packages would be loaded with books and Sunday school supplies. Often there was a sizable check included. Behind that annual shipment is the drama of Dr. Caroline F. Hamilton, one of the women whose devotion to duty stands out in the history of West Hartford. She was a woman in whom the Christmas spirit lasted all through the year.

Dr. Hamilton was born on her father's farm, a 70-acre tract on the south side of Farmington Avenue just east of Trout Brook. She loved learning and after the West Hartford high school was first opened in 1872, Caroline Hamilton was one of the first students. She was graduated in 1880 and then went to Smith College, finishing there with fine grades in 1885. She decided to become a doctor, and after she finished the rigorous course of study at the New York Women's Medical College, she went into internship, and then became a visiting physician under the school's settlement program. Later she became a teacher in the college, and went to the New York Infant Asylum as a resident physician.

In 1892, she began a life's work as medical missionary in the hospital at Aintab, Turkey, from which nothing could up-root her. In the bloody uprisings in Turkey following the first great war, when the Armenians were driven out, the hospital had to be closed, and Dr. Hamilton fled to Syria.

An orphanage in Beirut sorely needed someone to look after the 300 children entrusted to its care, and she took charge. But this proved too tame for her after the Turkish trouble. Her memory of the three massacres in Aintab, when shouting mobs came to the very gates of the hospital and threatened to kill everyone within, did not deter Dr. Hamilton from her work. In 1922, after a massacre in which 50,000 Armenians were slaughtered, she returned to her hospital, and to the people she had come to love. The hospital duties were enough for a full-time assignment, but she found time to minister to the unfortunate people of the countryside.

During her long service, Caroline Hamilton never loosened her ties to West Hartford, returning for her infrequent vacations. She kept up her membership in the Congregational Church and wrote its members regularly. They in turn became interested in her work in Aintab, and the plight of the beleaguered Armenians. The Christmas package from the Bible class, and occasional gifts and checks came from the church members.

Caroline Hamilton has been an inspiration to West Hartford girls as the life of Edward Morley has been to many West Hartford boys. Morley was the man who found the atomic weight of oxygen. He spent his childhood here and here it was that he retired after an exciting life of discovery and achievement. He was raised on a farm in what is now a populated residental area of town,

Albany Turnpike just west of Flagg Road. His father frequently took young Edward into Hartford. One day they stopped in at Flavius Brown's bookstore at Main and Asylum. Mr. Brown offered the lad a free book. "A chemistry book, if you please" was the instant suggestion. Morley's steady climb to international fame began with that early textbook. It took him to London and the Royal Scientific Society where he was awarded the coveted Sir Humphrey Davy Medal for his work with oxygen. He became a preacher in Ohio, but his love of learning won out over his desire to preach, and he accepted a professorship in Western Reserve University. When the school moved to Cleveland, he went with it. He found time to fill a chair of chemistry in the Cleveland Medical School as well. When he retired, he returned to West Hartford and set up a laboratory in his home on Westland Avenue where he continued his experiments, maintaining a wide correspondence with leading scientists of the world.

His fame on far-off horizons did not blot out keen local interests and his sense of good citizenship. Edward Morley took an energetic part in the growth of churches and schools in West Hartford. When he died the whole town mourned, and honored him by naming a new elementary school on Fern Street and Bretton Road, the Edward Williams Morley School.

And thus, for a score of generations, the sons and daughters of West Hartford have fanned out across the nation and the world, spreading Yankee fame in industry, science, education, in statesmanship and arts.

VI. BOUNDS OF THE TOWN

It is simple to say that West Hartford is bounded on the north by Bloomfield, on the west by Farmington, on the south by Newington, and on the east by Hartford. But these boundaries had a long, hard time jelling, as one farmer in the reservoir area used to tell his grandchildren. He never moved, but the town lines changed so that at one time or another he lived in four different communities: Farmington, Windsor, Bloomfield and West Hartford.

In 1672, when the "Thomas Hooker Company" turned its attention to the western division of Hartford, the Town was a mile and a half wide, from Quaker Lane to Mountain Road. The farms ran the whole distance. Some were as narrow as three rods, others as wide as ninety, except south of New Britain Avenue. Here the farms were divided into tiers running north and south. All the land from Quaker Lane to Woodland Street in Hartford was to be set aside and kept *forever* as a common for use of all the people.

This area was for two generations faithfully kept in heavy woodland. Some of its great oaks still stand today, shading homes that border the streets which divided the great common when the land proved too commercially valuable to remain as a park. In 1732, some acres of the common were innocently fenced in for sheep pasture. Nine years later another enterpriser leased a bit for tanning-vats. Another three years and another citizen was allowed to set up a sawmill; then came another sheep pasture.

The common was encroached upon by the settlers of the West Division as well as by Hartford because farming land was in great demand. The original proprietors were dead, and so, after a memorable court contest, the old Town Common was in 1754 laid out in thirty-three tiers of lots and divided up. Within seventy-five years the entire tract was in private use. A good share of it was to become West Hartford.

In the meantime, settlers slowly began to move into the West Division lots. By 1710, there were thirty-four houses, including seven just completed, and one hundred sixty-four people. They petitioned the General Assembly, then in session in New Haven, for a community organization of their own, "especially local gospel privileges". They were "settled something remote" from Hartford. So far were they from church that "a good part of God's time is spent traveling backwards and forwards, which if otherwise we might spend in his service to our comfort."

Not only was there distance, the roads were bad, and at times the rivers could not be forded. The children were a problem, too. Their families felt they could not take the smaller ones in to Hartford for the entire day and so they were being "brought up in darkness in such a land of light". Nor dared they leave them unguarded at home, "especially in dangerous times, whereby we do

not only expose them to their own fears, but to our enemies' rage, or in hazard thereof."

The good citizens of Hartford did not take kindly to this desire for separation. They sent their petition in remonstrance, but the General Assembly decided that the settlement not only warranted their own church; they also felt it would grow. There was room, a committee stated, for another fifty-six families!

The new West Division grew, not only in population, but in size. As early as 1732, residents of Farmington, who lived on the eastern side of Talcott mountain petitioned the General Assembly to be made part of Hartford. They felt that the distance from their homes to Farmington Center was too difficult, especially during the bitter cold winters, and that they found it more convenient to attend church in the West Division. But the burghers of Farmington were more successful in their resistance than those of Hartford. They fought this second petition successfully in the General Assembly.

Eleven years after the Revolution, Noah Webster, justice of the peace, affixed his signature to a deed that conveyed to Joseph Selden the ownership of two rooms and a part of the cellar of the Hoisington home on Selden Hill near Farmington Avenue. West Hartford had in Joseph Selden a champion who would not be defeated in his efforts to identify his farm with West Division rather than Farmington. The Hoisington family continued to live in their section of the house. This was not unusual in earlier days, particularly when a widow was deeded a portion of a house, with kitchen privileges. Eventually Joseph Selden bought out his "very close neighbors" in the same house and started the prospering farm and the long line associated with the name Selden in the continuing history of West Hartford.

Even so, it took Selden over forty years to get into the West Division parish. No wonder, for in 1830, when the legislature set off from Farmington all the territory west of Mountain Road to the top of the mountain, the Town of Farmington lost title to 4,000 acres of Talcott Mountain!

This was not yet the end of the Farmington boundary dispute. When the separation movement gathered momentum in the West Division, there remained a little group of people on Buena Vista hill who were tied politically to Farmington even though they did turn towards the new West Hartford for convenience sake. It was Deacon Hezekiah Selden, a descendant of old Joseph, who once again tackled the bouncing boundary between the two towns. His family, and that of Mark Gridley and a few other neighbors on the hill, preferred to travel down the hill to the West Hartford Center instead of making the six-mile jaunt into Farmington.

Once again they petitioned the legislature, and in 1859 another 330 Farmington acres were ceded to West Hartford. These were located from the reservoir south to Tunxis Road. One final correction of the Farmington and West Hartford boundary was made as late as 1943 when a small part of Tunxis Road was re-drawn to establish firmly which town would be responsible for the maintenance of the street.

In the east, when West Hartford was finally given its independence from Hartford in 1854, there were people living east of her boundaries who were members of the West Division church. They lived in the "no man's land" east of the "Prospect Hill Road", and wanted to become part of the new Town. Some were successful. They were those who lived west of Prospect. But others, like the Cones, were absorbed into the City of Hartford.

In this eastern strip of West Hartford was another rise known as Hamilton Hill. It is now called West Hill, but there was a time when it was "Vanderbilt Hill", after Commodore Vanderbilt, "the richest man in America". He began as a ferryman and ended owning a great railroad system, the New York Central, the "first great mogul of American capital and industry". When he died in 1877, his estate was worth over a hundred million dollars.

His second son was named after the crusty capitalist, Cornelius Jeremiah. "Corneel" was quite a boy. He loved to gamble, and he loved women. He also suffered from epilepsy. His father, whose fortune was based as much on shrewd buying of real estate as on running a railroad from New York to Chicago, bought a farm in the West Divi-

sion, and sent his ailing son to manage it. This was West Hill.

The commodore and his pretty young wife visited the farm in the eighteen fifties, and when Cornelius complained about his son, Ellen asked, "Isn't it somewhat of your fault?" Her husband's eyes are reported to have watered. "The view of Hartford is pretty", he said, avoiding her question. Later as they sat in the West Hill mansion, the commodore pointed to a solid gold model of the crack steamer "Cornelius Vanderbilt" and said "I'd give that ship, and her boilers, too, to cure Corneel of his ailment". When the old tycoon died, "Corneel" returned to New York, but after a brief stay, he came back to West Hartford, and re-purchased West Hill. On the site of the old mansion where his father had visited, he built a $60,000 new home, the last word in elegance. A heavy brownstone wall was built across the brow of the hill, still separating West Hill from Farmington Avenue. When the house and the wall were finished, Cornelius Junior was to come up from New York the following day to move in. Instead he committed suicide in a New York hotel room.

As early as 1797, the Ecclesiastical Society voted unanimously to separate the West Division from Hartford. More than a century later, the chronicler summarized it: "Persevering in this object until nearly two generations were in their graves, they at last triumphed over the customary opposition, and in 1854, by a special act of the legislature, the town of West Hartford was constituted."

By this time the desire for separation was far from unanimous. While 149 people petitioned the legislature in 1854 for independence, another 93 asked the legislature to keep the West Division within Hartford. They argued the convenience of doing business downtown, and feared higher taxes that separation would bring. They were outvoted. The Town set out upon its own course, and in 1954 the people could celebrate its Centennial anniversary.

Peace reigned until the year 1895, a turning point for 39-year-old West Hartford. A group of new residents along the eastern edge of town wanted to secede from West Hartford. They managed to bring a petition before the State Legislature that would annex to Hartford the area bounded by Prospect Avenue, Asylum Avenue, Steele Road and Whiting Lane to Park Road. The petitioners were wealthy residents of the Town's "East Side", a good many of whom had moved to West Hartford between 1875 and 1890 to gain the advantage of the Town's low tax rate, then ten dollars a year for each thousand dollars of assessed property value. Corporate stock ownership was taxed in the town of residence, too. As more people moved in, some of the financial advantages began to evaporate. The water rate went up, the tax assessor reviewed his assessments, cesspools proved a particular problem because of the lay of the land.

It was inevitable that some of the newcomers should decide they had made a mistake moving out to West Hartford. But rather than move their families back, they came up with the idea of moving their land back to Hartford by juggling the boundary. This threat the farmers of the western end of Town met head on. They swarmed to the Town meeting to register a protest. In this heated meeting, a young "East Sider" got up and argued against secession. This young red-head whose quiet, effective arguments helped the farmers rally an overwhelming vote against the petition, was Charles Collins Cook, later to become a State Senator.

"Red" Cook's half century of public service began at this meeting. It went on to include a successful fight against the spoilsmen of New York City's Tammany Hall, in which he carried off the contract to rebuild the city's famed prison, the "Tombs". His specialty was government construction, and he knew it inside out. He was the "Great Compromiser" who, for a generation ran the government of West Hartford, quietly, effectively and sometimes arbitrarily behind scenes.

Cook supervised the building of the State Library and Sculptor F. M. L. Tonetti, then world-famous, was commissioned to do a group over the facade. Senator Cook and Signor Tonetti worked together quite closely, and Tonetti persuaded the politician-engineer to sit for a bust that was designed to catch the essence of the typical American leader. That bust became Tonetti's greatest

work. The marble original is in the Paris Luxembourg Museum; but few of the admiring Parisians know that this was the man who prevented the "East Siders" from breaking off from the Town of West Hartford.

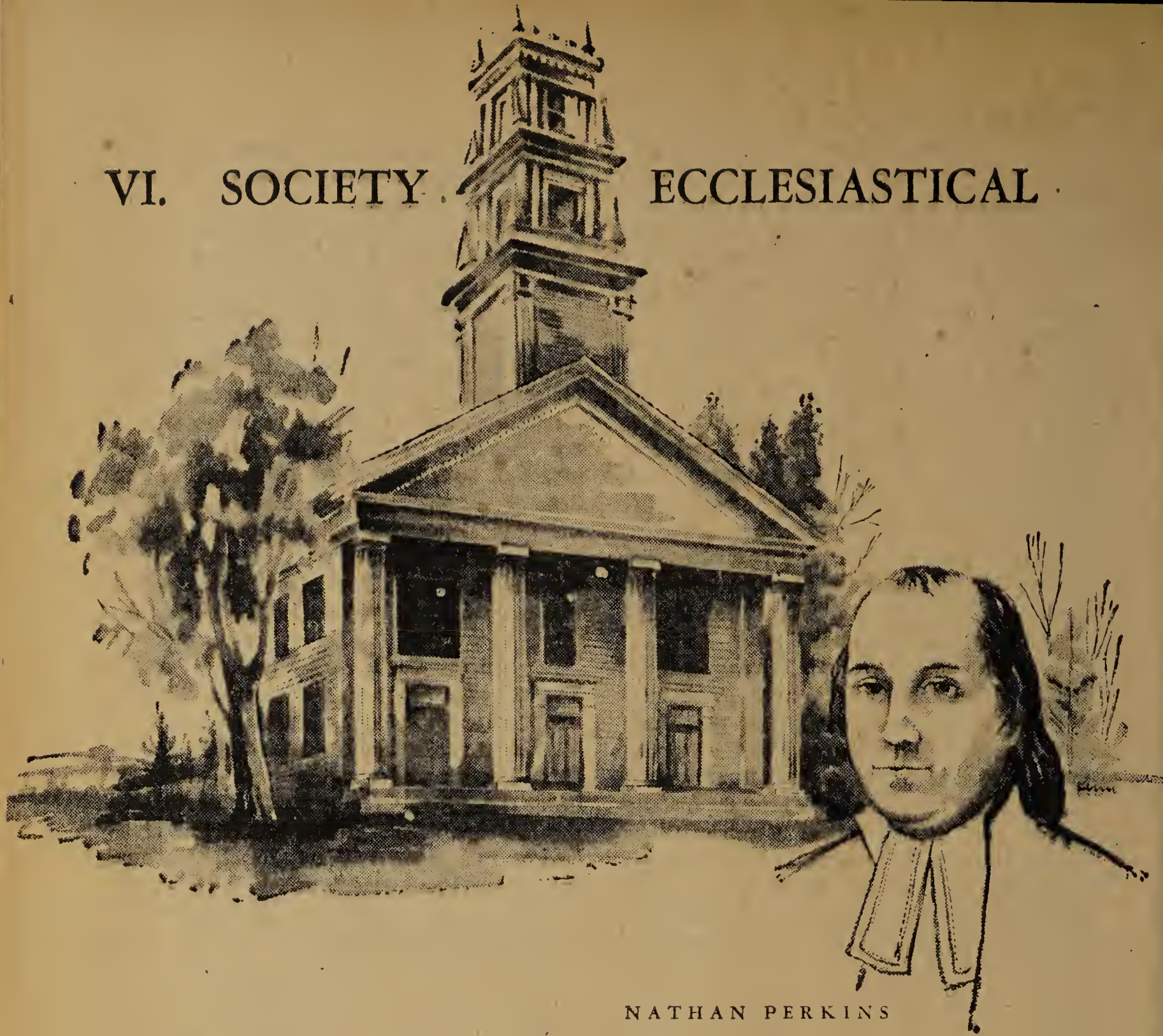
It was 30 years later that Hartford threatened to gobble up the entire Town. On December 11, 1922, the Hartford Chamber of Commerce came out with a "Greater Hartford Plan" that included the annexation of West Hartford. For two years the legislative halls resounded with the pro and con standard bearers. There were strange comrades in the great debates that followed. Uncomfortable head of the Hartford Chamber of Commerce, originator and spear-head of the annexation move, was the man who had saved the East Side for West Hartford a generation before—Senator Cook!

Both the *Hartfod Times* and he *Hartford Courant* were, in varying degrees, in favor of the annexation. But the Democratic party of Hartford feared the Republican votes that would be cast in city elections if West Hartford were brought in. The president of the Hartford Electric Light Company favored it because he felt the Town had gotten "city tastes". With the defection of Senator Cook, the West Hartfordites needed a champion desperately. They got one in Huntington Phelps Meech, who in a bitter and unprecedented caucus fight won Senatorial nomination.

For two months annexation was the front page story. Meech inspired a Town vote on the question and the result was 613 for annexation, over 2,100 against! But still the Hartford Chamber of Commerce pushed its State bill which would abolish the Town's officers, and make West Hartford the eleventh ward of Hartford, any time within the next five years that a majority of the voters of both Towns should vote it. It was Senator Meech's caustic oratory which killed the proposition. He refuted point by point the arguments of the opposition; and brought counter charges to bear in volleys. The bill was overwhelmingly defeated in the legislature.

Senator Cook, early champion of the Town, had gone down to defeat on this issue. Ironically enough, his victor, Senator Meech, was to suffer his defeat similarly. In 1929, the senator supported the effort to bring the entire Greater Hartford area into the Metropolitan Water District. The stubbornly independent West Hartford Town spirit would not accept this idea of consolidation, even though it had nothing to do with political sovereignty.

VI. SOCIETY ECCLESIASTICAL



NATHAN PERKINS

THE Congregational Church through its governing committee, the Ecclesiastical Society, was both father and mother to West Hartford. For more than a century it controlled the religious, educational and political life of the Town. From the year 1713, when twenty-nine newly-organized members built the "Fourth Church of Hartford" on the Corner of West Division Main Street and the Farmington Road, until 1818, when the State withdrew its financial support of the churches, the history of the Society was identically the history of the Town. And from 1818 until the Town was separately incorporated in 1854, the Church on the corner was dominant in most matters.

This role of power started with the very first pastor, Benjamin Colton, who ruled from the pulpit for 46 years, the father of two sons who also became ministers. Son George Colton served at Bolton, Conn., for almost half a century, too, and was as celebrated in his way as was his controversial father.

Benjamin Colton finally resigned his pulpit, having gotten in a huff with a deacon, one of the early Braces, over the selection of the weekly psalms. Four years before, another of his parishioners had broadcast the story that the reverend had gotten tipsy. While visiting one Samuel Terry, the learned doctor had allegedly drunk thirteen gills and a half of brandy. To his aid rushed Josiah Steele, son of one of the founders of the church. Josiah preferred charges against Asa Merrills who had spread the story. This precipitated a squabble that lasted the remainder of Mr. Colton's ministry.

Not only did Asa Merrills have to "make gospel satisfaction", proclaim his guilt, seek forgiveness, and promise something better in the way of future conduc, but another defender of the pastor rose up. Asa Merrills, Ebenezer Sedgwick proclaimed, did profane the name of the Lord. This was too much for Asa. When a delegation from the church came to pray for him, he told them to take off. He had become an Episcopalian, and "had nothing further to do with the church".

Mr. Colton left the church shortly thereafter. But eager young Mr. Hooker, his successor, was not a man to let sleeping dogs recant. He took the issue to the North Association of Congregational Ministers. As he saw it, a man should not be able "to escape the wrath of the church by becoming an Episcopalian." It was not surprising that the Association voted that the Congregationalists should still claim the right to "proceed to further censure" of their errant member. Unfortunately they were not able to persuade Asa of the merit of their decision. He never returned to the Congregational Church.

Young Nathaniel Hooker, a descendant of Thomas himself, made quite an impression on his flock during the short 12 years he occupied the pulpit, "a hearty friend to all mankind" (excepting Asa Merrills). And when he died, he was "extremely lamented". A later chronicler described him as "the ablest man who ever ministered to this church", although Nathan Perkins, who for sixty-six years ministered to his flock in West Division, might vie for that accolade. Perkins, minister at West Hartford from the time of the first shot of the American Revolution at Lexington until the Panic of 1837, trained a hundred and fifty West Division boys for college and fifty for the ministry.

Perkins was unusual in many ways. He had a rare sense of humor, and great physical strength as well as a keen mind well grounded in fire & brimstone theology. At one time he owned 200 West Hartford acres where he raised grain and bred fine horses. One day, while he was working alone in his fields, raking hay, a stranger is reported to have ridden up. He dismounted and inquired if he had the honor to address Dr. Perkins.

"Yes".

The man said he desired to wrestle him. The good doctor looked this way and that, and seeing no one in sight, grappled with the man, and laid him on his back. The stranger rode off satisfied.

Perkins allowed the Quakers into Town, but no other sect. Lorenzo Dow, the celebrated Methodist, was refused admission to Mr. Perkins' church, and so he waited until the afternoon service was over, mounted the great horse block and harangued the throng for an hour or more. Tradition has it that George Whitefield preached under a great chestnut tree in Town, too. Perhaps the reverend felt more kindly towards this evangelist since his Methodism was strongly tinged with Calvinistic doctrine, so much so that he separated from Wesley.

Perkins purchased the house on the west side of Goodman green. It was a house that had been built in 1758 for his short-lived predecessor. It was, until the spring of 1954, still there, serving this past half century as the rectory for the Episcopal Church.

Perkins was immensely popular with his flock, including the militia, which included all able-bodied men between 18 and 45. They drilled twice a year, in May and in September. In 1826, a whole brigade mustered in West Hartford for a two-day parade in the meadows on the west side of Main Street. Fences had to be knocked down for a half mile to make room for the troops. At noon, the militia marched to Dr. Perkins' home, formed a hollow square and escorted him to the tavern where he said grace.

He is reported to have preached over 7,000 sermons. His interest in the cause of education made him a prominent member of the school committee of the parish, visiting schools regularly and at times questioning the scholars in respect to the contents of the catechism. He was active in missionary work and in 1789 appointed to visit Vermont and preach the gospel to the "New Settlements". In 1810, he was one of a group of ministers who met in Farmington and helped establish the American Board of Foreign Missions. A few years later he invited other ministers to his home to discuss the proposition of establishing a theological school; and in 1824, he was invited to lay the cornerstone of what is now the Hartford Theological Seminary.

Two years before his death the "sweet singer" of Hartford, Lydia Sigourney, wrote a poem addressed to the Perkins inkstand which he had used for over sixty years. It was printed in the New York Commercial Advertiser. This "Capacious vase, so long decreed the roots of intellect to feed", that she memorialized its service "from youth to age (of the) saint, philosopher, and sage".

The Reverend Perkins' life spanned the years that saw the end of the "Standing Order"—the combine of Federalists and Congregationalists which for so many years ruled the State so conservatively that it became "the land of steady habits."

The religious Utopias that the Puritans dreamed of did not always take firm root in the soil in which they were planted. The distances to church, the undisciplined settlers who came later, the rigors of life in the wilderness, the inevitable "Indianizing", and the endless conflict between the wealthy and the poor—these forces broke up many an early church. By 1660, the "golden age of piety" was drawing to a close. Connecticut churchmen tried to keep the young interested in the faith of their fathers. They drew up what became known as the "Half-Way Covenant", and a little later (1708), they held an ecclesiastical convention and wrote the Saybrook Platform. But reforming by authority was doomed. The "Age of Reason" was coming.

The growth of experimental religion, however, helped the church survive increasing "worldliness". The quickening of individual religious experience caused breaches in the Congregational Church, but it also gave the stiff-necked oligarchy the resilience to bend with the time and weather the storm. This individual hunger took the form of revivals and awakenings. In this heart of Congregationalism each year some church reported feeling "gentle refreshings from the presence of the Lord". There were two great revival periods in the State: the "Great Awakening" of 1735-40, which enabled other denominations to establish themselves; and the "Great Revivals" of 1800, 1831 and 1858. While some of the Congregationalists turned to the new evangelistic denominations, and others to the Church of England, most remained with the church, giving it a strength that enabled it to keep going strong after the loss of State financial support in 1818.

Another outcome of these religious pains was the new philanthropic societies of the nineteenth century. Nathan Perkins' part in the starting of the American Board and the Theological Seminary showed that West Hartford, too, was touched by this new all-men-are-equal fervor, even if Dow and Whitfield had to preach outside.

Perkins lived during yet another period of turmoil in the church; and that was the struggle between the "Old Lights" and the "New Lights". The former was the conservative element, the latter—the radical. Many of the "Old Lights" became Tories during the Revolution; and almost all of the "New Lights" were "patriots". During this forty years which churchmen label "The Unhappy Time", or 'The civil wars of the Lord", it was upset "Old Lighters" who gravitated into the Church of England ranks, and overwrought "New Lighters" who accepted some of the new Baptist tenets.

One of the most celebrated of these revivalists was James Davenport, the great grandson of the founder of New Haven. When a law was passed in 1742 prohibiting itinerant ministers, he ignored it and ended up being tried in Daniel Wadsworth's barn along with Benjamin Pomeroy. It was a two-day trial and forty militia were called out to keep order. Davenport was exiled to New Jersey and Pomeroy sent home to Hebron.

Hartford's second greatest revival was probably in 1696 when fear of an Indian raid and poor crops turned many backsliders to church. Her greatest days were undoubtedly in 1820 when our forefathers were willing once again—if only for a short time—to pick up and examine the old "hard sayings" of their forefathers. These "hard sayings" were that man is totally depraved, and God holds absolute sovereignty. One preacher always began his sermons with the words, "Lost, lost, lost", and children in school sang a song, "A Fallen Creature I Was Born".

Joel Hawes, Hartford's First Church pastor, was a strong revival minister. He had ten revivals in his own church with 1,681 new members, and he was in great demand in other cities to stir up God's interest.

When the revival began in Hartford

in 1820, Hawes had but recently come to this, his first charge, and to him, a self-made man, the congregation of "fine folk and fastidious lawyers" looked like an assembly of Roman senators. Sensing the need for more experienced help, he summoned Lyman Beecher, a man also moved by this one great idea—the promotion of revivals. A lively letter tells how Beecher was roused at night and how he "partly dressed, walked the room, with one boot on, saying 'Wife! Wife! revival in Hartford and I am sent for'. And the doctor came to us like a lighted torch in full blaze".

Over 200 were added to the First and Second Congregational Churches, and the revival spread to all the churches in the Hartford County North Association—including West Division's outpost. The Reverend Perkins' church grew. At the beginning of 1834, the Society voted it was expedient to build a newer and a larger house of worship. After a committee consisting of James Butler, Seth Talcott, Augustus Flagg, Solomon Flagg, Thomas Brace, Joseph C. Cone, Albigence Scarborough, Hezekiah Selden, Nathan Seymour, Ralph Wells, Morgan Goodwin, and Theron Deming had inspected several nearby churches, it was agreed to build a church 68 feet long, 56 feet wide, and to make the inside similar to that of the free (South) Church, Hartford, and the outside like that of the church in Bristol.

The building was completed the following year, and, while no longer the house of worship for West Hartford Congregationalists, it still stands on the northwest corner of Main and Farmington. It served for a time as Town Hall, and in the early days of World War II was used in troop recruitment.

In less than half a century after 1834, the church had again outgrown its quarters. To the west of the "old Town Hall" on the northwest corner of Farmington and Main Street, stood the Baptist Church, on property adjoining the Congregationalists. Neither growing church would make room for the other. Even after the courts mulled it over, there was no friendly solution. The Baptists moved north on Main Street, the Congregationalists turned over their property and building to the Town in return for land on their present site on the southeast corner.

Charles Boswell had as much to do with the move as any. When the Baptists declined parting with any of their land, Mr. Boswell put up $5,000 to build a new church across the street. He added the promise that he would double his gift if enough money were raised for a stone church. Mr. Boswell lived to see the grey stone spire rise on the prominence entering West Hartford Center; happily he did not survive long enough to know that the wind played havoc with the tower and it had to be bobbed a generation later.

Layman Thomas Brace, chorister and deacon, also looms large in the Congregationalist history of West Hartford. In 1820, Lory Brace purchased a violin from a sea captain who had brought it from Holland. He used it as chorister. When Thomas succeeded his father, he played the violin (along with Julius Deming's flute and Benjamin Bishop's bass viol) until the church bought an organ over his bitter orthodox opposition.

Thomas Brace served as choirmaster for forty years, and he and his fiddle were well-known throughout the State, at both church and social gatherings. When he resigned a year after the Civil War, it seemed like the end of an era. There were petitions for him to stay and testimonials to his virtues. Thirty years later a poem would even be written in his memory. It was entitled "The Time When Uncle Thomas Led the Old Church Choir".

One of the pastors under whom Thomas Brace served was Myron Morris, who also enjoyed long service. He preached for 23 years and then, like the Reverend Colton, he resigned. His resignation caused a tizzy. The year was 1874 and the woman's rights girls and the suffragettes were girding their bloomers and marching as to war. The men accepted Mr. Morris' resignation, but the women were quite bitter over the decision.

They made such a commotion that at a meeting held in December of the same year, one of the men made a motion that female members should have the right to vote on all questions brought before the church. Although it was seconded, this radical departure was, by general consent, put over to the next church meeting. For weeks the argument went back and forth, though it was nev-

er as bitterly contested as that over the introduction of the organ. On Friday, February 5, 1875, after a long discussion, it was voted that the ladies should have full voting rights. Thus women received suffrage in their church a full 75 years before they were granted it in national politics.

In 1942, the granite Congregational Church at the crossroads burned down, even though Mr. Boswell had seen to it that it was made of stone. It was completely gutted, only the Monson granite walls remained. In a heart-warming example of inter-faith good-will, the Temple Beth Israel on Farmington Avenue housed the Congregationalists for the twenty-two months their handsome new brick church was building.

Mr. Colton and Mr. Hooker, Mr. Perkins and Mr. Morris and the nine late pastors who followed in their tradition may, in their turn, have dreamed that one day their church would be a focal point in a great religious community. If so, in 1950, their hopes were realized when the *Christian Century* magazine held a poll of 100,000 ministers in Eastern United States. By their judgment, the West Hartford Congregational Church, with its more than 5,000 youth and adult parishioners, was selected as one of the twelve great churches of America. It was judged the one which under the leadership of The Rev. Elden H. Mills, "best represents the effort of Protestantism to serve the spiritual needs of a suburban community."

And so today, long after the Ecclesiastical Society gave over the running of the Town, long after the State withdrew its official support, long after other denominations moved in and built their fine edifices to serve the Town, the tall, white, handsome New England spire of the Congregational Church on the green, points out to all its dominance. It remains a gladsome memorial to all the good men, in the pulpit and in the pews, who worshipped here on Holy Days and built the Town during the week days from 1713, when the separate parish was created, on to the present.

VII. OTHER FAITHS PROSPER

A hundred years ago West Hartford was a "Gibraltar of Congregationalism". A few Baptists drove to churches in Hartford or Wintonbury (now Bloomfield), as West Hartford had no Baptist Church until 1858. By the cemetery on South Quaker Lane a tiny Quaker meeting was peacefully settling down to a long Rip Van Winkle sleep. There seemed to be room for but one church in West Hartford "and there were some who did not want another". And yet today, there are, in addition to the Town's nationally-known Congregational Church, nineteen other churches, built or abuilding.

The Quakers were the first sect the Ecclesiastical Society allowed to settle in the Town. In 1780, a small band of Quakers from the "Nine Partners" in Dutchess County, New York, came to the West Division.

On a single acre of land out of 15,000 acres which made up the division, this self-effacing little knot of men and women put down strong Quaker tap-roots. The land they bought from Charles Gilbert, whose family soon became one of the stalwarts of the "meeting". The Gilberts, their cousins, the Cadwells, the Carters, and the Edgertons, together with a few other members of old Town families, including the Arnolds and the Sedgwicks, joined up. When these pioneer families drove down Quaker Lane, past the Quaker schoolhouse to the new meeting house, men and women divided and entered the meeting by separate doors. In a way, their separation was even greater, for many of these first Quakers in Town were former Congregationalists, who became branded by their fellowmen for their heresy. As the sect grew, it attracted other Friends from surrounding communities. In 1830, when John Greenleaf Whittier came to Hartford to edit the *New England Review*, he naturally joined the congregation which had its place of worship in what was within a quarter of a century to become West Hartford. Poet Whittier's health, and the difficulties of his post, let him live here only two years before he returned to Massachusetts.

At first, because of the breach between Congregationalists and the Quaker converts, the Quaker schoolhouse was used only for instructing the children of the Quaker families. But in the early 19th century, it became the East District School. Both school and meeting house, apparently, having been supplanted by another place of worship, were bought by Benjamin Gilbert and moved by oxen up near his gristmill on Farmington Avenue. Years later it burned to the ground.

There is some difference among present day members of the rejuvenated society. Some believe the early "meeting" faded primarily because the members moved west during the period of the great "Yankee Exodus"; others avow that it was the Civil War that split up the "meeting". Both were likely factors. What Quaker families were still in West Hartford by the time of the Civil War,

were divided in their dictates of conscience. Many Quakers, torn between the pacifist tenets of their fathers' faith, and the equally powerful urge to aid the cause of freedom for the Negro, cut their family ties.

The Quakers raised the first strong voices against slavery, and the most persistent. From the first dim revelations of George Fox, to the clearer visions of John Woolman and John Whittier, the Society of Friends furnished the leadership in the long struggle to destroy the African slave trade and to abolish Negro slavery. It was through the joint efforts of the West Division "meeting" and other New England and New York societies that Jonathan Edwards was able to attack the "institution" of slavery before the Assembly, a joint effort that resulted in 1788 with the prohibition of slave trading by the citizens of the State. A fundamental belief of the Quakers was always the necessity of following one's own conscience. Nevertheless, the Civil War struggle within the religious group to reconcile one deep conviction with another conflicting one, greatly weakened the organization in the Town, and it appears that at this time formal "meetings" were discontinued for many years.

Eventually other Quakers from distant parts of the country came to settle in West Hartford as a part of the eternal shifting of Americans from one section to another in quest of friendship and fortune. Gradually the small congregation of Friends was rebuilt, its members new in name, but old in reverence for the humble, deep-lying truths which had inspired the first Quakers to build their meeting house and school house in West Hartford.

The outstanding West Hartford Quaker name is that of Gilbert. Benjamin, Elisha, Charles and their families were West Hartford's number one Quakers in the old days. Benjamin was born in the West Division in 1790. He grew to be a powerful figure, even as a young man. Adhering to the simplicity and sobriety of his faith, he was nevertheless genial and well-loved as "Uncle Ben" to everyone in Town. His wife Rhoda was an active participant in the Women's Society of Friends, a strong force in the Town at the beginning of the 19th century.

Benjamin and his brother Charles obeyed the teachings of their society which encouraged an active but selfless part in community affairs. When the whole issue of separation of the West Division came up many of the Quakers opposed the move. Benjamin Gilbert's name led the list on a strong petition to the State Legislature asking that the move to create West Hartford be denied.

There weren't enough people for a separate Town, the petition read. It added that the people here constantly and regularly did business in downtown Hartford because it was more convenient. Then, too, the thrifty Quakers suggested it would cost more taxes to be a separate community. The Gilberts' word had great weight. He and his brother owned most of the land between West Hill and Trout Brook in the Center between Farmington and Fern Streets, and south of the avenue on the east and west sides of Quaker Lane. But the pressure for separation grew greater. Many of the members of the Congregational Church, from which the Quakers had broken away, were behind the move for a separate Town.

All through the early nineteenth century, although Quaker influence waxed and waned, there was a strong effort among the Friends to discourage inter-marriage. The Quarterly Meeting reminded the Gilberts and the other worshippers that mothers should "be clear of conniving in the remotest degree their daughters' forming connections out of Society". The growing Gilbert family stayed in that fold. It gathered often at the fine old Benjamin Gilbert home that formerly stood on the north side of Farmington Avenue, west of Quaker Lane. The end for this noble man came shortly before Christmas of 1868; and his "meeting" reported the sad event to the New York mother church with the words that "love and unity appear to be maintained as becomes Friends. No differences known and Friends avoid tale-bearing and detraction".

The Friends' spirit of "brotherly love" is expressed in two actions of the West Hartford "meeting". When the Episcopalians organized in Town a hundred years ago, the Quakers lent them the use of their meeting house for their services. And today, a century later and in a new meeting-house, the same spirit holds. While the Jewish congre-

gation of Beth El builds its new synagogue off Albany Avenue, they hold their Friday evening services in the warm but plain meeting-house on South Quaker Lane, where a simple mantel and, in the chilly months, an open fire in the hearth substitute for the altared sanctuary of Episcopalians, or the Ark of the Tabernacle of the Jews.

Not only did the Episcopalians start off in the Quaker meeting-house, they also inherited the Congregational parsonage built for that Colonial Puritan, Nathan Perkins. Even after Hartford grew up, it was years before Episcopalians ceased to be oddities. In 1800, there were only five Episcopal churches in the entire county, Christ Church in Hartford; St. Andrew's, Simsbury; and three other small parishes that eventually became extinct. In 1840, the young Rector George Burgess of Christ Church encouraged an overflow group to form a new parish, St. John's, Hartford. The rector of this new church, Arthur Cleveland Coxe, and Dr. Burgess began to work together to found missions in nearby towns which for generations had been closed to Episcopal influence. They sponsored Grace Church, Windsor; St. Mary's, Manchester; and St. James's, West Hartford. Burgess and Coxe went on to become bishops in the church. And so did one of the first rectors of the new church. William Ford Nichols became rector in 1875, and to him, all future historians of the parish are indebted. He wrote the first historical sketch before he went on to become the Bishop of California.

First meetings in the Quaker meeting-house were in 1842. But the efforts to plant the church in West Hartford were premature. The following year Dr. Burgess alone started services in "a more centrally located place", Bishop's Corner. Until the completion of the brick church on Goodman Green, in 1854, the services were held in the old North District schoolhouse at the crossroads. At the time of the Town's Centennial. the parishioners of St. James's found themselves once again building a new church, and holding their meetings in a Town schoolhouse, the Louise Duffy elementary building.

St. James's Church was organized on June 12, 1843. Judge Samuel H. Huntington was named first clerk, and Morgan Goodwin delegate to the Diocesan convention in Hartford. The church was named by Dr. Burgess, who reasoned that since the first church in Hartford was called St. John's, his brother, St. James, should be remembered in the second.

The first Episcopalian decade was mighty thin in West Hartford as God worked his wonders elsewhere. Had it not been for the efforts of Dr. Burgess, and the proximity of Trinity College, St. James's might easily have folded completely. And when Dr. Burgess left Hartford to become the Bishop of Maine, little stood between the tiny, feeble church and extinction. Besides the angels, there was Judge Huntington, eminent local benefactor, and Trinity trustee. And there was a young Trinity graduate, John L. Sawyer, who conceived the idea of starting in the Center a school which would be a feeder to the college. The project, fairly successful for a time, suggested the revival of St. James's parish, which for years had existed in name only. The new era began at a meeting in early 1852, at the Academy building, on the east side of the Green.

This building, used as a school until 1865, had a classroom on each of two floors and a front porch with tall pillars. One of these rooms was fitted up as a church, and in no time at all, the Reverend Samuel Benedict, assistant professor of Ancient Languages at Trinity College, had a flourishing Sunday school, Bible class, and a church going. Professor Samuel Benedict felt that a church building was necessary, and so with the help of women of the Hartford parishes who raised money for a lot, he pushed along the building of a church that would hold two hundred communicants. It was completed (even to a melodeon!) in 1854.

The new church had a subtle influence on the town. The soft-red brick, the neighborly porch, the buttresses and the Norman windows, all suggested Tidewater Virginia more than an ancient Puritan "Gibraltar". At that time the severe Doric temple of the Congregationalists was a few rods to the north. Now the sacramental joined the evangelical on the Town's Green, and a Christian community was the more perfectly realized.

And yet this sacramental church

proved to be an evangelical one, too. It helped found the Episcopal churches in Unionville and Collinsville. The parish contributed many missionaries and lay-readers who went out to expand the work of the Church. There was Charles Richmond Fisher, who spent most of his ministry among the poorer people on Hartford's old "East Side", and so endeared himself to his parishoners that they called him Father. Another St. Jamesian was John H. Betts, who founded St. John's, Pine Meadow. Yet another hard-working missionary was William Corbin, an old-time high-churchman, who founded a short-lived parish in Coventry. He loved good church music, and tried to introduce the chanting of psalms in Gregorian style to his little country charge.

Still the church itself grew slowly. At times it seemed hardly to grow at all. Sometimes years passed without a baptism, confirmation or marriage. West Hartford was a rural town and the farmers were more apt to be Congregationalists or Baptists. Many Episcopal families continued to go into Hartford to their old parishes; and then, when St. John's moved to its present site in 1909, most of the church people in the eastern district naturally flocked there. St. John's had originally been located on the east side of Main Street just south of the Wadsworth Atheneum. It was an off-shoot of Christ Church and organized in 1841 with thirty-seven members. Before the church moved to West Hartford, it had been instrumental in the founding of St. John's, East Hartford, and the Church of the Good Shepherd in the South Meadows, which, because of its close connection with the Colt family, was sometimes endearingly called "The Church of the Holy Revolver".

By 1888, it was already felt that consideration should be given to moving the church to a more western location within the city. And when the trustees of the new Morgan Memorial decided they should erect the building in close proximity to the Atheneum, the church property was sold for $70,000, and the church permitted to continue the use of it until 1907. Land at the present location was given by John and Thomas Enders, and with the money realized from the sale of its former property, the new St. John's was enabled, to be a handsome edifice. To it was added in 1915, a parish house, and thirteen years later yet another addition was made. Poor St. James's looked very rural in a day when people had little interest in the old, and so for many years St. James's received comparatively little help from the suburban flood. Several of its clergy were professors at Trinity, and while the parish owed much to their service and their intellectual prestige, they did not give great continuity.

Under Rev. Dr. James Gammack, who came in 1896, the church made a real effort to expand. He was another exceptional priest, who contributed articles to Scottish encyclopedias, and wrote books on Church history. But the time was not yet ripe. Even the coming of the automobile and the rapid growth of the Town did not seem to help the struggling parish. In 1929, the financial situation was desperate, the rector had retired, and there was even agitation to return the property to the diocese and disband! When Bishop Edward C. Acheson, father of the recent Secretary of State, heard of this, he was aghast. In a growing prosperous town, a church should be looking forward, not back! The Bishop was a friend of long standing of the rector of St. John's, Dr. William Hooper, and he persuaded him to "take over St. James's". Dr. Hooper received a second assistant minister, who was to be named vicar of St. James's. For a year or more, St. James's lived under the sheltering wing of its "brother", St. John's. The vicar from the established church was a young priest named Walter H. Gray. Today he is the Bishop of Connecticut, a leading figure in the national church. Thus St. James's weak, faltering though it was, had its part in the development of four bishops of the church.

The following year, 1931, a former sea captain took over the church. He was George G. Guinness, and the slumbering giant began to stir! Mr. Guinness was a man of considerable intellectual accomplishment, but so were his less successful predecessors. He was a man of action, as well. This marked the difference. In an era of great disbelief and disinterest, this sturdy pastor forced men to consider the church in their lives. His background was one that developed a man who made decisions, and who could ably call upon others to do the same.

During the first World War, a storm whipping up mountains of angry swells across the wild Atlantic, the captain of a munitions ship was signalled to throw out his sea anchors, ride the storm in safety. But that wasn't in character for young Captain George Guinness. Plotting a new course, he skirted the edge of the storm and brought his arms-laden ship to port days ahead of the rest of the scattered convoy, providing the Allies ammunition in the nick of time. He received a bonus of five thousand dollars from his ship's owners for this mark of daring and determination.

By the time he was thirty-five, he had amassed a tidy fortune. But money was not sufficient; he had not been really helpful to his fellow-men. So he left the sea, and went to law school. That, too, seemed a blind alley. He entered the church, and came to West Hartford, where for sixteen years he labored. When he retired, he had brought his ship safely into port. St. James's had become a truly going concern. Under its new minister, Douglas W. Kennedy, it would outgrow its hundred-year-old church, and build a new structure on Farmington Avenue just west of the Center, and alongside of its new rectory.

While St. James's builds a new parish house to serve as church until it rebuilds St. James's, other devout people in town are busy raising new edifices in which to worship their Creator. There are two new Jewish temples, a Lutheran Church, a Presbyterian Church, and much building by the Roman Catholics.

Thus not all of West Hartford's church history is ancient history. Much of it is being written from day to day by chuffing steam-shovels. Dreams are being cased in brick and stone on Stanley Street and on South Main as well, where the Lutherans are building.

The West Hartford Lutheran Church began 450 years ago when the 22-year-old Martin Luther was walking with a friend in a thunder-storm. Lightning struck them, killing his friend, stunning Luther, just as it had blinded Paul on the road to Damascus, fifteen hundred years before. The young German student, thankful for his escape, vowed to turn his back on the world and, against his father's desires, he became an Augustinian monk. Though he never wanted to create a real breach with the established church, Luther's disagreement with the leaders in Rome came to a head in the "Ninety-five Theses" which he posted on the church door at Wittenberg, his hurling a bottle of ink at the devil, his translating the Bible into German.

This dynamic faith that combined the new forces of Mercantilism and Protestantism with the liturgy and doctrine of the church of Rome, came to the New World only a few years after the Pilgrims. Actually the very first white men who lived in Hartford were the Dutch Lutherans, who established a trading post at Dutch Point before the colonists arrived from the Massachusetts Bay colony. But over the years, relatively few Scandinavians settled in New England. Mostly they migrated into the great farm belt of the mid-West. What they lacked in numbers, the Lutherans of New England made up in purpose. The church administration always kept an open eye for new Christian opportunities. One of these opportunities came in West Hartford in the early years of the World War II, as the Town was growing rapidly.

In 1943, the Mission Board of the church made a house-to-house canvass of West Hartford, found sufficient interest in the church to establish the first Lutheran congregation here. The Mission Board invited Martin C. Duchow, a native of the Pacific Northwest, to come to the West Hartford church from Albany. The Board had purchased a home on Westland Avenue and it was their original intent to build their church here. But the neighbors objected. Duchow was not named Martin for naught. He stuck by his guns; and won the right to establish his church on Westland Avenue, and then, with Lutheran sagacity, he discovered a more acceptable location for the new church.

On September 3, 1944, the first services were held in the converted Mary Geer house, at the corner of the Boulevard and South Main Street. There were 69 charter members when the church officially became the Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Hartford, honoring the Biblical village. Among these charter members were the

Kuehns, the Neys, and other familiar West Hartford names. After many delays, the Reverend Duchow's flock raised the first bundle of dollars upon which they might begin the construction of their church. Less than five years ago, the building began. It will be a moderate Gothic church rising resolutely on this important West Hartford intersection. Today there is the ground floor and a modest facade. As the congregation, 250 communicants and another 150 in the Sunday school, grows, the main body of the church will be added in fulfillment of the determination of the Lutherans to bring to modern living the faith of Martin Luther.

West Hartford is also represented by Scandinavian Lutherans, members of the Augustana Synod. Not by a church, but by a little chapel on Park Road, where approximately 100 small-fry members of Hartford's Emanuel Lutheran Church attend Sunday school; and where Emanuel's Boy Scouts, and other church groups meet. The church was founded in 1889; and very early in its existence set up a gathering place for the youngsters of "Little Sweden" in West Hartford. In the early days it was called the Parkville department, and met in Grace Episcopal, but since 1929 it has been on Park Road. Here each Sunday, and at nursery school during the week, another group of children of the Town are trained in religious values, and in how to live together in friendship and mutual respect.

One might have expected Oscar Hjerpe would have been a Lutheran, but his family belonged to one of Sweden's minor denominations, a sect known as the Methodists. When Oscar was but nine years old, his father, a skilled iron-worker, took his family to America. They settled in Mechanicsville. Oscar was only sixteen when he set out to be a plumber in Hartford.

There were many Swedish friends near the Hjerpe home on Avon Street. Oscar joined with them on Sundays to worship in the Methodist Church. There were quite a few of these Methodist "square-heads" in Hartford, so on September 13, 1885, Oscar and seventeen others met at the First Methodist Church on Asylum Street, and organized as a Swedish congregation. A year later, the Swedish Emanuel Methodist Episcopal Church had its own pastor and its own meeting house on Asylum between High and Ann. Actually it was incorporated as the Svenska Methodist Episskopal Emanual Forsamlingen, and it soon raised enough money to build a church on Hungerford Street.

It took only 25 years to outgrow this home. By then Oscar Hjerpe had moved to "the open country" of West Hartford, buying a home on South Highland Street from a fellow Swedish developer. From there the firm of Johnson & Hjerpe ran a side-winder truck to jobs all over Greater Hartford. Not far from Hjerpe's home was a lot on the corner of the Boulevard and Lockwood Terrace. It was just a stone's throw from the end of the Park Road trolley at Prospect Avenue. The lot was owned by another Swedish friend, who offered it to the church at a very modest price. Together with the national Methodist organization, a building fund got going, and in a brief span, a new church was built. The Methodists came to West Hartford. Oscar Hjerpe had over the years filled every assignment his church could have given him, from organist to temperance lecturer in nearby Freja Hall. And it was he who was chosen to go from West Hartford to the General Conferences of all Methodist branches in both 1938 and 1939, the highest post given a Methodist layman. There he took part in the historic vote which dissolved the many segments of Methodism in this country, including the Eastern Swedish Conference which he represented. All became members of the Methodist Church of whose nine million American members some two hundred fifty worship in the West Hartford Methodist Church. Now the church conducts its services and keeps its records in English, no longer draws its pastors exclusively from the sons of Sweden. But its roots, set deep by men like Oscar Hjerpe are still Swedish through and through.

One West Hartford church has its spiritual cornerstone in Good Luck, New Jersey, the Universalist Church of the Redeemer. In 1770, John Murray, an ex-Calvinist from London, arrived in the New Jersey village and brought to America the widening revulsion against the religious doc-

trine of endless punishment. The Reverend Murray worked his way north, and in the 1780's, the itinerant preacher arrived in Hartford and sowed the first seeds of religious liberalism that were later to become the Church of the Redeemer.

These seeds were nourished by Elhaman Winchester, who appeared in Hartford, in 1796. Just by chance he fell in with a funeral procession and he preached a spontaneous grave-side sermon over a body he had never seen. Bystanders were so impressed with his commanding Christian character they persuaded him to stay in town and preach in the theater for an entire year, until his death. He was visited by Hosea Ballou, the Boston minister, who for a generation was the most influential Universalist pioneer in this country. When Ballou came back to Hartford in 1821, he got leave to preach in the Second Congregational Church, although the Universalist liberalism was a powerful splitting force in the established church. His influence led gradually to an open breach in which sixty members of the Second Church, Congregational, pulled away to join the tiny Society of Universalists. Their first church was erected on the Market Square, now Six Central Row. It was also the sixth church in the Town of 6,500 souls.

The non-conforming Universalists had little ritual or orthodox fear of hell-fire in their preaching. Their opponents were not satisfied merely with driving them from the established church, but often also tried to outlaw them socially. Religious feeling was so bitterly outspoken in those days that the Congregational Reverend Perkins once prayed "that roving Methodists and plunging Baptists might come to naught and be no more". As for the ever more controversial Universalists, they were stubbornly persistent in their belief that Divine Love is the central word of the Gospel. While the history of the church is marked with several periods of internal disunion and "reorganization", its financial history has been one of remarkable good luck. They sold their first church and realized almost enough to buy the lot and build their second church around the corner in 1861. This they sold in 1906 to the Travelers. The insurance company got its Tower out of the sale, and the Universalists got themselves a new church on Asylum Hill. This, too, they outgrew; and in 1930 they sold this now valuable property to another insurance company, the Hartford Fire. This sale made possible the present church on Fern Street, providing that rare edifice in church circles, a debt-free building from the very start and it is among the strongest of the five thousand Universalist churches in the United States.

On the corner of Park Road and Walter Street is the foundation of another young West Hartford church, the Alliance Church, which under its pastor, O. H. Bublat, is planning to raise a handsome brick church of New England style, seating approximately two hundred and fifty. This church is associated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, a sect that is unique in that it does not represent a schism from any other denomination, but grew out of the vision of a Presbyterian minister, who sixty years ago gave up his fashionable New York City church to devote his life to ministry among the poor.

Out of this vision have grown over a thousand missionary churches in the middle eastern states, and, about fifteen years ago, this new West Hartford church. For several years meetings were held in Freja Hall. When World War II ended, the first step in the erection of a church was taken in excavating a basement. For six years services have been held here, the mortgage is almost completely paid off, and soon the church edifice itself will rise to join those of sister churches in the Town.

The fifty families of the church might well have been able to build their church long ago were it not that half of all their giving goes into Foreign Missions. The sixty thousand members of the church contribute three million dollars each year to the support of eight hundred missionaries scattered throughout the world. Of the 250 missionary societies in this country and abroad, this little denomination ranks sixth in missionary giving.

The first Presbyterian Church in this area was one established in Thompsonville, in 1839. Hartford held its first Presbyterian service over a saloon on Main Street, in

1851. The West Hartford church was more fortunate. The Congregationalists gave them the use of their Music Room for Sunday afternoon services when the Westminster Church began in March of 1950.

And what is more, the Congregational pastor, the Reverend Elden Mills, promised the Presbyterians the use of the church auditorium if their numbers required it. In his offer, he pointed out that when Temple Beth Israel shared their synagogue with the burnt-out Congregationalists in 1942 and the war-rationed fuel presented a problem, the Jews shortened their services so the Congregationalists would have oil for theirs.

There is more behind this story than twentieth century practical Christianity. The Presbyterians and the Congregationalists have many close historical and theological ties. It has been said that the reason there were so few kirks in New England, and so few white meeting houses in the Middle Atlantic States, is because a non-interference agreement seems to have been arrived at about the time of the American revolution.

But now, in an expanding Town of the post-war period, with not a single church of any denomination in a twenty-five square mile area from Main Street west to Farmington; and with only one church for every four thousand West Hartford citizens, there was a welcoming hand to any new group who would move in and help relieve the crowded conditions of the existing churches. The Presbyterians were quick to seize this opportunity.

For their pastor, this new group, including thirteen members transferred from the Hartford Presbyterian Church, chose the Reverend Gurdon Trumbull Scoville, a native of Philadelphia, who had been graduated from Yale. Mr. Scoville had served as chaplain at the Hershey Industrial School for nine years, but had a pastorate when the call came for him to come to the mission church in West Hartford. So well did he serve the needs, and so ably did he help build the congregation from fifty-eight to its present three hundred and twenty-five members, that when the church became self-supporting in February of 1953 and thus had the privilege of selecting their own pastor, Mr. Scoville was quickly elected to remain.

They had secured a manse for their pastor in 1949. The next step was a church. From May 14 until October 1, 1950, services were held in the Buena Vista Clubhouse; and in the winter, they moved their growing band into Sedgwick School. This was not the first time the Presbyterians had met there. In 1941, a Sunday school was established, and for three years, meetings were held in the little red brick West schoolhouse on Mountain Road. They were discontinued for a period during the war.

Once the church services got going two questions developed. The name of the new church, and its physical plant. The first suggestion was that the church be called the "Community Church"; but to many this did not indicate its denomination. Others felt a Presbyterian church should be called a Presbyterian Church; yet some thought that New England would not take kindly to the "invasion" of Presbyterianism. Then some one came up with the answer. Westminster was a solid Presbyterian name, "but no one in New England would know it was especially Presbyterian". Westminster was unanimously adopted.

The problem of a church was not so quickly resolved. A block-long estate at 140 Mountain Road was purchased in 1950. Zoning changes, down payments, and alterations, made this a "drama equal to four Broadway plays"; but finally the dust settled. The first service was held in the big white mansion, on May 20, 1951; and each week thereafter a greater number of cars were to be found parked for service.

By November of 1952, it was necessary to hold two morning services; and at the last annual meeting when a building committee was appointed, a church to accommodate one thousand members was suggested.

As of the week of West Hartford's Centennial, and just after the Centennial of the First Presbyterian Church of Hartford, the Westminster Building Committee was meeting twice a week speeding plans to submit to the congregation of this, the most westerly of the churches of West Hartford. The kirk is on the move!

Late in the 1940's a small group of West Hartford couples, all of them former members of Hartford's conservative syna-

gogue, Temple Emanuel, began to talk about building a new synagogue in West Hartford. In July of 1953, a meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Isidore Savin and a temporary slate of officers was elected. Isidore Savin was named president of the Congregation; Arthur B. Silverman, son of Emmanuel's rabbi, was named treasurer; and Harry Kleinman, secretary. Temple Beth El began to take shape. An election of permanent officers in January, resulted in Arthur D. Weinstein becoming president of the Congregation; Lewis Chernoff and Dr. Gerald Pitergoff, vice-presidents; Albert Kaplan, treasurer; and Harry Kleinman, secretary. Land was bought from Peter Caseio on the old Albany Turnpike, ten acres at the western end of the nurseries. The first building of the new synagogue was being built in the summer of 1954, a school for children of the two hundred families who are already members of the congregation.

With the arrival of "The House of the Lord", Beth El, all three elements of the Jewish faith became represented in the Town. Beth El is the Conservative Synagogue. Beth Israel is the Reform or Liberal Synagogue. And Beth David, is the Orthodox. The "House of David" or the Orthodox Church was started in West Hartford in the fall of 1943, when Mrs. Rose Rosenstein and Mr. Gabriel Levine set out to establish an Orthodox Church. Today there are two hundred families who are members, and an additional one hundred families who belong to one of the associations within the synagogue.

Their building plan, which was underway in 1954, is one of the most ambitious in Town. For the first year, the group observed High Holy days in the American Legion Hall on Memorial Road, and in 1944, they secured their present property on Farmington Avenue at the corner of Dover Road. There was then a feeling that the people should be inclined to think of the temple as more than a religious center, the core of their communal life. For this reason, a number of synagogues at that time were given secular names. Thus the Orthodox Church came into being as the West Hartford Jewish Center, and as such it prospered. Later, as the first of three new buildings was being erected, the congregation elected to change to Beth David. This was to be the official name upon the dedication of the first new building in the fall of 1954, the vestry.

Beth David will have an air-conditioned auditorium seating one thousand, and there will be class and activity rooms. The second building will be the new synagogue, and when this is completed there is to be a school building. Under the guidance of Rabbi William Cohen, who has been rabbi to the congregation for eight of its ten years, the synagogue adds its contribution to the life and the culture of the Town.

Oldest of all the Jewish churches in the Town is the imposing Beth Israel Reform synagogue, whose twelve-sided dome commands the kind of location suggested in ancient rabbinical lore. A synagogue should be on an elevated location and on a main thoroughfare. In 1843, when the State legislature passed a statute permitting Jewish congregations to exist, a group of German Jews in Hartford established a congregation. In the beginning years it followed the orthodox ritual, but out of Hamburg, Germany, came the Reform movement and gradually the congregation of Beth Israel gravitated into the liberal trend. The year after the congregation was founded, Judah Touro appealed for funds for the yellow fever victims of New Orleans. The Hartford congregation answered his appeal, and shortly thereafter, when Touro died, they learned he had left five thousand dollars in his will to the generous congregation. This money enabled them to purchase the old Baptist Church in Hartford, which they renamed Touro Hall. When they left this property for their new home, it became in 1935, the Calvary Temple. In 1875, there was a fire. The ruined building was sold to the Cheney Brothers and the congregation built the first synagogue in New England, dedicated to religious purposes. The cornerstone ceremony was conducted by the Grand Lodge of Masons in Connecticut. This Temple on Charter Oak Avenue survived the difficult period when the congregation wrestled with their doctrinal problem to be liberal or orthodox. After a short-lived schism, the congregation was reunited, and its steady growth continued under the leadership of strong rabbis and dedicated laymen like Gershon Fox and Isidore

Wise, who has been president of the congregation for almost half a century.

In 1936, the Beth Israel congregation numbered three hundred and twenty-five families, and they moved to their new home, considered one of the most beautiful temples in America. It was designed to be, first of all, a Jewish Temple. It was to symbolize in every way the people who worship there, as well as the ideals and principles to which that people is committed. Since the Jews derived from the Orient, and yet have spent the greater part of their history in the western world, and since this is a people who had the inspiration of its faith in the East, and has "attempted heroically to live that faith in the West", Byzantine architecture seemed an ideal solution.

The massive temple is full of symbolic significance. It is also a treasury of liturgical heirlooms, including four terra-cotta cones from the ancient city of Ur, in Chaldea, the home of Abraham. But even more important than the physical plant in which the Reform congregation worships is the contribution it has made to the community in which it lives. Under the leadership of Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman, who came to the synagogue in 1925, Beth Israel has continuously fostered brotherhood in the life of the Town. On January 3, 1942, the Meeting House of the Congregational Church was destroyed by fire. On the same day, the Temple was offered to the Congregationalists to be used by them for Sunday services for as long as they would need it. The offer was accepted in the spirit in which it was made, and for twenty-two months during the years of World War II, the West Hartford Congregational Church worshipped at Temple Beth Israel.

When the new Congregational Church was dedicated, a bronze plaque acknowledging this event was dedicated in the new Meeting House. The following week an identical tablet was dedicated in the Temple, in answer to the question of Malachi which appears at the base of a stained glass window in the synagogue, given by the Christian Community of West Hartford, in 1936, in honor of Rabbi Feldman—"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"

The Temple has grown from its three hundred and twenty-five families until in this Centennial year it numbered over 800 families. And in the Centennial summer, work on the final addition to the temple was set to start—the erection of a meeting house behind the Temple. Plans called for a hall accommodating one thousand two hundred, and a dining room that can seat 700 at one time. There will be a fully-equipped stage, new social and activity rooms, new class and meeting rooms. Behind all is six thousand six hundred fifteen years of Judaism—and the eternal eye of God. Just as the Town has temples where the liturgy of thousands of years ago is still followed; so the Town has churches that represent the "New Thought", on one hand and the "Restoration" on the other.

During the Town's Centennial, there is scheduled a dedicatory service at the Unity School of Practical Christianity on Farmington Avenue and Walbridge Road—just down the street from the Temple Beth Israel. Unity Church has been in Hartford for twenty years, but not until late winter of 1954 did it move to West Hartford. It is a non-denominational eclectic faith based on Christian teaching, but with a strong emphasis on healing, and the power of the mind. The international Unity School of Practical Christianity came into being some sixty years ago, when Myrtle Fillmore was told by her doctor she had tuberculosis and not long to live. Mrs. Fillmore studied religion, and came to feel that faith could cure. She recovered and with her husband set up in Lee's Summit, Missouri, the first school of Practical Christianity. There are now schools—as the sect call their churches—all over the United States. While not all the ministers are women, those who have served this area have been. First was Harriet Gilbert, who brought the philosophy of Unity to Hartford, and then C. Edna E. Titus, who commuted to Hartford from her parish in Cambridge, Massachusetts, until Miss Faith Cornwall came East from Ft. Wayne, three-and-a-half years ago, to take over the local school.

Under her ministry the group has grown and purchased the large home in West Hartford where it now holds its services. Two local members of the congregation are studying for the ministry and soon will be

ready to enter the parent school at Lee's Summit. While most of the membership came as a result of the society's publications, personal contact of the present membership attracts new members weekly.

The beginning of another new West Hartford denomination came from the written word, with a little help from its energetic young pastor, Wilm E. Hebbard. His is the "New Testament Church", The Church of Christ, Washington Circle. This sect numbers some ten thousand congregations in the State of Texas alone, sixty-seven in Dallas. It is an outgrowth of the "Restoration", which signifies a period in church history following the Reformation, in which various theologians felt that the church could best be served not by attempting to reform it, but by essaying to restore it to its original form. The creed of the group is "Speak where the Bible Speaks; be silent where the Bible is silent".

In November of 1949, the Hebbards came to Town from Abilene, Texas, where Mr. Hebbard had taught in the Abilene Christian College. For fifteen months he held meetings in the Hotel Bond, and in June, 1951, the Church of Christ secured their present quarters on Washington Circle. Already the group has started a chapel at Westover Field; and when in the Fall of 1953, an opportunity presented itself for them to secure a second place of worship in the North End, more convenient to almost half of its congregation, a second Church of Christ was opened on Hartford's North Main Street.

Among the oldest churches in the Town is the Town is the Baptist. Three years before the Civil War, Elam Tuttle, Joel Rood, Virgil Woodford, Joseph Sisson, Lyman Hotchkiss, and Joseph Bishop purchased an acre of land on the north side of Farmington Avenue, adjacent to the Congregational Church. At the time there was a tavern, a barn, and a shed on the property. For a while the ballroom of the tavern was used as a meeting hall for the new congregation, which numbered seventeen originally.

On May 16, 1858, the first baptism was held and ten were admitted by immersion, two by letter. By year's end there were 43 members under first pastor, Elisha Cushman. On July 10, the cornerstone of the new church was laid and first services were held in the new church on February 3, 1859. A parsonage, built in 1860, next to the church, was sold in 1900, but the church stayed on Farmington Avenue until 1937.

At first the Congregationalists did not take kindly to the coming of the Baptists, but in 1866 when the Congregational Church was being repaired, the Congregationalists met in the Baptist Church from July through September. The Baptist minister preached the morning service, the Congregationalist, the evening one. The early preachers were mostly Elders from the Baptist denomination in the State. Admission to the church were held when these circuit riders came to Town and officiated at baptisms by immersion in Trout Brook by the bridge on Bishop Road, now called Fern Street. As this was a novel feature in the church life of the community, it regularly attracted a large attendance from the entire neighborhood, farmers drove their families in from across the mountain just to see these "queer folks".

Later, students at the Hartford Theological Seminary filled the Baptist pulpit. Over the years—almost a century now—twenty pastors served the church, most of them for two years or less. The longest tenure was held by the Reverend Ellis Gilbert, who was pastor during one of the churches most fruitful periods. Dr. Gilbert came in 1926, within four years had increased the membership by 120, and the church budget was quadrupled. He stayed until 1943 and much transpired during those critical seventeen years. The other minister with long service was the Reverend Earle Darrow, who spent five years at the church from 1915 to 1920. Among other pastors was George W. Hinckley, who began his ministry in this church and went on to establish the nationally known Good-Will Homes for Boys. In 1889, there was a woman pastor and in 1914, James Perry, a young seminarian occupied the pulpit. After finishing his ministry here he served in the Red Cross during the first war, and while working in the Middle East, he was killed in Armenia by the Turks in 1920. The present minister is the Reverend Albert M. McCartney.

The attractive white clapboard church

on the Turnpike served its purpose well and faithfully. In 1924 a new furnace and plumbing system was installed, and the basement finished so class-rooms could be held there. The church was re-dedicated in 1925, a new organ adding its joyous note to the service, but the "aged frame" grew weary with the passing of the years. In 1936, the seventy-eight-year-old church spire had to be held up by three guy wires from the ground. It was feared that "a strong wind would blow the steeple into the street". It was time to move. A plot of ground two hundred and forty by three hundred and thirty-two feet was purchased out North Main for ten thousand dollars; the old church site was sold for seventy thousand dollars; and the year 1937 marked another milestone in the history of this old Town church. At first there was some thought of moving the old church up the street to the new location; but that proved impractical. So a new structure, the exact replica of the old, with a large ell added in the rear as a parish house, was built. In 1943, the Reverend Daniel Rider came to the church. There were one hundred and twenty-five members. During his stay which ended in 1947, the church membership rose to over 500. The church's community service and world-relief work has earned its recognition in the Town and beyond. Its Boy Scout Troop No. 49 is one of the oldest and strongest in the Charter Oak Council.

The Elmwood Community Church began in 1873, by George Thomas Goodwin of New Britain Avenue. Feeling that the children of the south end of Town should have a place of worship closer to home, he organized a Sunday School in the old South Division School house on the corner of New Britain Avenue and South Main Street, just up the hill from his father's farm. By the year 1876, the Sunday School was overflowing, and the Elmwood Social Union, under the inspiration of Mr. Goodwin, took on a fund-raising job that resulted in the building of a chapel on New Britain Avenue at Grove Street.

In the 45 years that followed, the chapel was the focal point of Elmwood's religious life. It was affiliated in varying degrees with the First Church of Christ in the Center, and to its pulpit came a growing list of Hartford Theological Seminarians, many of whom went later to bright missionary futures. At times, the services lasped for lack of money or a man to fill the pulpit. In 1921, a completely independent Community Church, inter-denominational but affiliated with the Congregational faith was organized, and James F. English was ordained.

During his tenure, the need for a new building became pressing. At a meeting to discuss the housing emergency. Mrs. William Mueller said, "The way to get what you want is to begin with what you have", and she laid twenty-five cents on the table, the contents of her purse. Over the years this mite has been increased to $200,000 and this has been translated into a new church, parish house and parsonage. Today, under the leadership of Sterling S. White, 600 parish members carry on the tradition of the forty who first attended George Goodwin's pioneering little Sunday School, four-score years ago.

The first Catholic Church in West Hartford was St. Bridget's in Elmwood, a mission of St. Lawrence O'Toole, Hartford. Its first services were held in 1917 in the auditorium of the New Departure Manufacturing Company. The church was erected the following year. In 1919, the parish was set off from St. Lawrence O'Toole, and it has grown constantly from that time when it had 100 adults and fifty children.

On November, 1920, a second West Hartford Roman Catholic parish was founded, St. Thomas the Apostle's. The first mass was held at the corner of Quaker Lane and the Boulevard and the large lot, still owned the church, lies vacant since the decision to build on Farmington Avenue in 1926. The remarkable story of St. Thomas' is that of a parish which grew tenfold in a single generation. In the year 1926, the contented owner of a large colonial house on the corner of Bishop Road and Farmington Avenue had a call from a distinguished visitor in ecclesiastical garb. Admiring the house, the guest announced with a twinkle in his eye that he planned to buy it, forthwith producing a shiny new copper penny as a down payment. A few days later Father John Francis Callahan completed the purchase.

The story of how he bought a new

rectory is typical of the way this sturdy priest built the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle. As a young priest Father Callahan had helped create the famed St. Charles parish in Bridgeport, and had been given a church in Washington. Connecticut, in recognition of his accomplishment.

After World War I it became obvious that the young new parish of St. Bridget's was destined to outgrow the single church on New Britain Avenue. Sprawling West Hartford needed another parish and so the bishop handed the problem to the enterprising young priest, still under 45, before which few priests are assigned a parish of their own.

Father Callahan tallied up the 125 or so Catholic families who lived in the area of the new parish. With the help of this congregation he, in seven days, set up a prefabricated church on the southwest corner of Quaker Lane and the Boulevard. Before five years had passed Father Callahan sensed the rapid northward and westward growth of his parish, and so he set out to acquire the site at Dover Road and Farmington Avenue. Here he fashioned a basement church, an economy that was popular at the time, but of which Father Callahan, in retrospect, had doubts. His zeal and good humor persuaded the Town authorities to bend Dover Road to accommodate the new structure.

When the choice had to be made between completing the upper church or building St. Thomas' School on Dover Road, Father Callahan decided that the education of his future parishioners outweighed the inconvenience to the then present ones. The result is an institution regarded in the church as one of the finest in the Connecticut diocese.

As the parish welled, the Bishop created a third West Hartford parish between St. Thomas' and St. Bridget's, a division which might have cramped the style and the imagination of a less resourceful and imaginative pastor; but Father Callahan's parish soon had more communicants than ever before. The completion of his dream for a great structure began to move towards reality. What had been virtually a one-man fund campaign for a quarter of a century was moving towards a successful end. The high regard in which his parishoners held him was shared by his superiors in the Church. In 1946 he was appointed Vicar General of All Catholics in Connecticut a deputy to the Bishop. In the year of his jubilee as a priest, the white haired Monsignor Callahan completed the building task he had started 31 years ago. More than 1,000 Catholic families in his St. Thomas parish shared his pride in the structure which one dedicated man, with the help of others, had built to God.

So, throughout the Town the building of new houses of worship grows to keep pace with the material growth of the Town. In a world fraught with fear, tormented with questions of economic and political insecurity, the church in West Hartford remains today as it has in the darkest days in history, the beacon and the sanctuary for all.

VIII. INDEPENDENCE!

A great deal of the early cry for independence from England came from the seaports, where customs officials and Courts of Vice Admiralty set their heavy hands on colonial commerce. Into these ports slipped Royal Navy sloops to "impress" or draft native-born Americans for His Majesty's service.

Hartford, on the other hand, was one of the two political capitals of the American colony, which had long enjoyed what amounted to self-government. Midway between New York and Boston, Hartford citizens were kept informed of the troubles and trials of their fellow colonists, but they did not feel them.

Thus, it remained for Grenville's ill-planned Stamp Act in 1765, to stir up the valley. Soon Sons of Liberty were in heated communication with other committees of correspondence north and south. Local indignation mounted with every report of events along the seacoast, and when the shot was fired that was to be heard round the world, it was heard loud in "Hooker land".

Connecticut was one of the best organized of the colonies, boasting in 1774, of twenty thousand men of military age, formed into eighteen regiments with at least one troop of horses to each. On the parade ground in the center of the West Division, which Tim-

othy Goodman had given in 1747 "to be a place of Parade Forever", the local militia drilled.

Connecticut men were among the first to rally at Boston. Among the two hundred patriot Nutmeggers who arrived in time to see action at Breed's Hill was young Tom Hooker who had, two years before, brought his bride, Deacon Whitman's daughter, Sarah, to his large farmhouse on top of Four Mile Hill. It later became an inn called "The Sheaf of Wheat", in which Washington and Lafayette were entertained. It stands today as the Sarah Whitman Hooker house at the southeast corner of New Britain Avenue and South Main Street.

When Tom Hooker left to fight for independence, he freed his slaves. It didn't make sense according to Hooker, to be out fighting for freedom while back home he held slaves in bondage. One of the freedmen was an exceptional fellow, named Bristol, who learned to read, and developed into such an authority on scientific agriculture, that he was consulted by the neighboring Yankee farmers until he died at the age of 83. A month or two after leaving town, Tom Hooker was killed, perhaps the first casualty from the West Division.

That same year Ethan Allen, with an assist from General Benedict Arnold, captured Fort Ticonderoga, taking several score British prisoners. They were dispatched to various parts of the country, even as far west as Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Two of the prisoners were assigned to the Hooker Farm where they were under the watchful eye of Bristol, and the gentle confinement of Sarah Hooker. When they were exchanged, they gave the widow a gold ring signifying their respect. This is the patriot for whom the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was named. She died at the age of 90.

Tom Hooker was one of six thousand Connecticut men who went to Boston under the command of General Joseph Spencer and the colorful Rufus Putnam. Two hundred took part in the costly defense of Breed's Hill. Connecticut men fought in virtually every battle of the war. They served with reluctance under Schuyler in the Canadian forays, and on Long Island. They served with Arnold, and were among those chosen to cover Washington's masterful withdrawal from Long Island. Had Washington accepted the services of the so-called Connecticut Light Dragoons, (the first "U.S. Cavalry"), consisting of four to five hundred volunteer farmers who rode into camp on "rough country horses", the continental line might never have been flanked, nor the battle lost.

Among the most distinguished of the Nutmeg warriors was Colonel Sam Wyllys from West Division. He distinguished himself at the siege of Boston, and fought through the war to the Virginia campaigns of 1781. His brother John became a Major with Lafayette's Light Troops in Virginia. Wyllys, who had been the first captain of Company A of the Governor's Foot Guard when it was organized in 1771, was buried in the family plot in Center Churchyard in downtown Hartford.

Curiously enough there is no monument to the Wyllys family in the burying ground, despite the fact that father, son, and grandson, over a consecutive period of ninety-eight years, held the office of Secretary of State for Connecticut.

While West Hartford cannot boast a notable spy like Windsor's Purple Heart winner, Daniel Bissell (of whom the former Town Tax Collector, Arthur R. Thompson, wrote in his book "The Road to Glory"), the Town can celebrate a hero in young Moses Goodman. During the bitter winter of Valley Forge, the residents of the valley collected a purse of $30,000 to be sent to the relief of the desperate soldiers. Moses Goodman volunteered to undertake the dangerous mission of delivering the money to Pennsylvania. He placed it in his saddlebags, mounted his horse, and accomplished the daring feat, returning safely home.

One record says that when he stopped for the night, he would toss his saddlebags carelessly in the tavern corner, or under a bench at the inn, thus disarming suspicion of their true worth. Another story is that his horse excited the envious admiration of many of the people he met along the way. While he would not sell her, he feared the horse might be stolen, so upon setting out in the morning, he would have his trained mare limp out of the inn-yard and for a distance

up the rutted roads, on to safety.

The Gillette (or Gillet) family, who lived down the road from the Webster Farm on South Main Street, have an enviable family record of devotion to country. Original settler Jonathan Gillet served as a lieutenant in the militia during the Indian troubles; his grandson, Jonathan, was captured in the Battle of Long Island, and died in the prison hulks in New York harbor. Jonathan's fourteen-year-old son also enlisted, and almost met his father's fate. Young Jonathan was captured at Horseneck, and tossed into an old sugar house from which he finally made his escape.

He had better luck than Lt. Colonel Joel Clark, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Long Island and died in the prison ship in New York Harbor one week before Christmas, 1776. Other Revolutionary heroes included a Lt. Hulbert who was killed at Trenton. Captain Ezra Selden was wounded in the assault on Stony Point and survived only five more years. Private Eli Mix died on the field that day and Major Epaphrus Bull died for Connecticut's independence in a Virginia field during the very last weeks of the war.

It is difficult nearly two centuries later to make positive identification of West Hartford men who fought in the War of Independence, but some family names stand out in the official rosters of Connecticut troops. Eight Hartford Olmsteads are on the Lexington Alarm List of 1775, along with John and Sam Hurlburt, Aaron and Augustus Burnham, Tom, Theodore and John Spencer, Joseph Pitkin, and Benjamin Woodruff. Captain Abraham Sedgewick also mustered thirty-four men to ride to Lexington. In this group were Ebenezer Faxon, Abraham Webster, Isaac Flowers and Simeon Merrill of West Division. They are all credited with two days' service on this alarm.

When the war came to a boil, Epaphrus Bull was put on the Committee of War for the Expedition against Ticonderoga and Crown Point. The mission was to secure cannon to use in the relief of Boston. Sam Wyllys, Jesse Root and Ezekial Williams took part in this "Ticonderoga Enterprise", as it was officially known. Simeon Belding also went overland from Noyes River community to Lake Champlain for he is listed as serving on the sloop "Enterprise".

Official records list the familiar West Division names of John Bill, Samuel Sedgwick, Jonathan Gillet, John Burkett, Asa Hall, Frederick Still, Daniel Taylor, Solomon Colburn, John Fowler, Simon Kinney, John Vibert, Nathan Whiting, Lewis Stanley, and James Bugbee. These West Hartford names run like a strong thread through the annals of America's heroes and patriots. William Wyllys served under Enos Bull during the War of 1812; the Revolutionary War General John Sedgwick became the grandfather of the celebrated Union General John Sedgwick of Civil War fame. The names Buckland and Finn appear on the Regular Army rosters during the Mexican War along with West Division militiamen Lorenzo and Zenas Parsons, Sgt. Charles Pease, William Pratt, and John Isham.

The first official acknowledgment of West Hartford service is indicated in official records of Daniel Gilbert, who served a year and a half with Scott in the war with Mexico. When the recruiting sergeant asked him where he came from, he reported "West Hartford", and thus it went in the records, eight years before the town actually existed!

After the year 1854, it became much easier to identify West Hartford men. Many there were who fought to preserve the Union, who fought in Cuba and the Philippines in '98, in France in 1918, and in virtually every corner of the world during the last decade.

Though the records of personal participation are sketchy, four places in Town clearly tell of West Hartford's role during the War of Independence. There is Goodman Green, no longer the grand "place of Parrade" it was two hundred years ago. There is Burgoyne Park in Elmwood, also a greatly diminished shadow of its original size; and there are the two reminders of our French allies: the memorial stone in South Cemetery and the camp-fire sites on Talcott mountain.

When news of the defeat of "Gentleman Johnnie" Burgoyne reached West Hartford there was great rejoicing. West Hartford men had fought against him at Bemis Heights, Freeman Farm, and Saratoga. Captain Ebenezer Faxon and friends in the

southern part of West Division decided the victory warranted a lasting monument. So where the lane, later to be named Quaker, joined the old south road to Farmington, New Britain Avenue, the farmers planted a small grove of elms. These developed into landmarks—the Burgoyne Elms. Around this memorial to liberty, a village grew up—Elmwood. But as the village grew, the stately elms surrendered to disease, to road building and excavation. All that remains today is a tiny curved triangle right in the midst of Elmwood's sizable business district.

In Old Center Cemetery, along North Main, a block from Farmington Avenue, is a large boulder by which can be seen at various seasons of the year, two small flags—an American, and the French tri-color. The inscription on the boulder explains the second flag: "In memory of the French soldiers who died in West Hartford during the Revolutionary War." It is said that there are twenty unmarked graves of Connecticut war dead in the same plot, but to discover more about these French dead, it is necessary to go out to the mountain side.

On the east slope of Talcott Mountain, just north of Albany Turnpike, near Reservoir No. 6, are the ruins of approximately a hundred fireplaces, so old that full grown trees have grown up within some. Two groups of soldiers used the site.

First, there was General Putnam and his Connecticut militia. Following the Battle of Saratoga, Putnam's troops were directed to settle for the winter of 1777 midway between New York and Boston, to be prepared for any spring campaign that might develop. The troops encamped along the side of Talcott mountain, but within a few days, were ordered out to Redding.

When Rochambeau brought his 6,000 French troops to Newport in 1781, he conferred with General Washington in Wethersfield, and it was decided to attack New York City, employing the new allied force as storm troopers. An alternate plan called for converging on the main British forces then in the Yorktown area. Either plan called for a march across Connecticut. The men were dispatched in three march orders, two thousand men to a section, each section following at twenty-four hour intervals. It was a burning summer season when the troops, weak from a long and confining sea voyage, set out from Rhode Island. The men were unable to move as quickly as had been hoped.

Worried about the plight of his soldiers, this fifty-five-year-old General, who had fought in many of France's greatest battles and had fifteen thousand men die for him, sought a site for a hospital camp. On the abundantly wooded eastern slope of Talcott Mountain, west of Bishop's Corner, he discovered General Putnam's sheltering ledge. Here he set up the camp that shielded his troops through the winter of 1781 and the following spring.

There is some possibility that it was the fear of smallpox or a contagious ship's disease that made necessary the French camp so far removed from civilian centers. Row on row of fireplaces, some square, some circular, were built from the native stone. At the ledge overlooking the camp was established the officers' quarters, which Washington supposedly visited several times. So sturdily did they build, time and the rough activities of lumber-crews have not entirely erased the Rochambeau fireplaces. The underbrush has obscured many, but even today a visitor can walk among 25 or 30 of the original hundred or so.

After the main body of his troops moved out of the Hudson Valley, Rochambeau's hospital camp was disbanded. The men who died there were buried in the North Cemetery. There they lie in constant memory of the French lives sacrificed for American freedom. When the Revolution ended, the real problems of a young country began. West Hartford felt the effects of the economic troubles that followed the peace. Foreign trade, even interstate trade, became curtailed; money became scarce. The western movement began to stir. But the East continued to grow no matter how many sons started West. There were prosperous years ahead for the farmers of West Division now that the war had been won, and the heroes home.

IX. FAVORITE SON

On October 16, 1758, in the front upstairs bedroom of the square, white house that still stands on South Main Street, (since painted red and familiar for its "salt box" lines), a son was born to farmer Noah Webster, descendant of early Governor John Webster, a deacon of the church, a justice of the peace, and founder of the first Book Society of West Hartford.

The boy grew up to hate his name of Noah, and his country grew to think of his name and the dictionary in the same breath. Unfortunately the mere bulk of his pioneer dictionary obscures the man.

Noah, Jr., was no typical schoolmaster, even though he taught in Glastonbury, Hartford, and back in his own home-town, following his graduation from Yale, in 1778. Webster was a fellow of great boldness and small forebearance. In his day he launched numerous reforms and innovations, and defended them noisily. He was a controversial figure throughout his life. "Not many men have ever been so sure of themselves" wrote one biographer. It was almost impossible for Webster to imagine himself in error. He had no respect for authority or dignity. Once he lit into the national hero, President Washington, heaping coals on him for suggesting a Scotch tutor for his stepchildren. He almost seemed to make a point of collecting powerful enemies. The usually discerning Thomas Jefferson called him "a mere pedagogue of very limited understanding, very strong prejudices and party passion."

And yet this was the man, who in the year of his death, wore the dress of his youth some sixty years past. He could be seen walking the streets of New Haven, a tall, lean, black-coated man with a tie-wig, black small clothes, black silk-stockings, silver-buckled shoes. "If you had met him in China", writes Van Wyck Brooks, "you would have known he hailed from Connecticut. Always a farmer's son in his heart of hearts, a busy-body, a self-important, vain, but upright, honest, aggressive, enterprising, pertinancious patriot."

Noah Webster was a paradox, and in this paradox comes as close to being the embodiment of the American system as any one man. He was a "main-chancer", keen on "self-improvement". He was a boiling patriot, determined to obliterate all traces of servility to the English crown. He had an intellectual appetite that knew no bounds, working at a large desk that was a hollow circle, piled high with dictionaries and grammars in four and twenty languages, he worked feverishly in the middle. And yet he became a conservative Federalist even to the clothes he wore.

What makes him so important? Something more than his Blue Backed Spellers. Something more than his American Dictionary.

He was a dreamer as a boy; but his understanding father, who would catch him day-dreaming under a tree in the Webster apple orchard, appreciated the fact that in

his son burned some special light. The justice scraped up the money to send young Noah Jr. to Dr. Nathan Perkins at the Congregational Church for schooling. And when the time came for Noah to go to college, his father mortgaged the farm—and almost lost it—in order to keep Noah in Yale.

During the Revolution, Yale disbanded, and Noah's class assembled in Glastonbury for study. Noah, who had played the fife in the Yale undergraduate musters, joined the local "alarm list"—his father was its captain. But he saw no active duty.

Following graduation Noah returned to the family farm but he was not a farmer either. One day his father handed him a virtually worthless eight dollar Continental note and said, "Take this! You must now seek your living; I can do no more for you." Noah locked himself in his room for two days to think his problem through, and then took off to be a teacher.

Later he studied law and passed the bar. He became a journalist. He wrote a sound treatise on epidemic and pestilential diseases; he edited John Winthrop's "Journal", a notable historical contribution. He compiled school readers; wrote pamphlets on banking; on insurance; on the decomposition of white-lead paints; on the rights of neutral nations during war time. His monograph entitled *"Experiments Respecting Dew"*, has an honorable place among pioneer American essays on the physical sciences. His essays had much to do with the development of the U. S. Weather Bureau, with the U. S. Census. Webster himself regarded his "Sketches of American Policy", as the first distinct proposal for the United States Constitution. He was well on his way towards becoming a latter-day "universal man" like Benjamin Franklin, when he became obsessed with one idea—the concept of a Federal Language.

He returned to West Hartford and began his monumental work. He made friends with the "Hartford Wits", particularly with Joel Barlow, who was shortly to die in a lonely war-swept Polish village waiting for Napoleon to pass through on his retreat from Moscow. But most of the time he spent accumulating his vernacular word book, assembling what has come to be called America's "second declaration of Independence".

In 1783, Part I of Noah Webster's *"Grammatical Institute of the English Language"*—soon to be known as "The American Spelling Book"—was published. It swiftly replaced Dilworth's old *Speller,* and was quickly followed by the remaining two parts of the *"Institute"*—a grammar and a reader. And a legend was born. Its popularity was instant. It was a pioneer work in its field. Its spelling was simplified, its nature patriotic. It standardized American spelling, and added good original American words to the tongue. "A national language is a band of national union" said Webster. And this concept of a Federal language, that would ultimately do away with the effete, static tongue of England, caught the imagination of the rambunctious new country. "Gaol" quickly became "jail", "plough" was henceforth spelled "plow" and uniform spelling became the over-due order of the day.

All was not smooth sailing for Webster despite the fact special presses were to be built that day-in-day-out, year-in-year-out, poured out the blue-backed spellers until the presses wore out and were junked. By 1889, sixty-five million copies were sold. Still there were those who found Webster's zealously American spelling too much to take. Edward Gould in a once famous essay denounced Webster's American spelling with vindictive fury. William Cullen Bryant reprinted this philippic in his *New York Evening Post,* and offered to contribute to a fund to have Gould's denunciation read "twice a year in every school house in the United States until every trace of Websterian spelling disappears from the land".

But even Bryant was forced to admit later that the Connecticut "Schoolmaster to America" had "taught millions to read and not one to sin." Webster's reform spelling finally won the day. Not every suggested spelling in the early editions of the blue-backed speller are common today. Tung never replaced tongue, nor wimmen, women. But hundreds of other spellings and many of the general principles of Webster's Federal language are today's usage; honor for honour, traveler for traveller, center for centre, theater for theatre. Nor does any twentieth century Yankee legislature spell eter-

nal "aetaernal"; nor does the Nutmeg businessman write a month as "Febrewarie." Nor does the military title "Jinerll" appear on the 1954 voting lists. Yet that was spelling before Noah Webster came on the scene.

In the midst of the outcry raised by teachers when Webster first published his *Grammar,* he fell madly in love with the diminutive Boston heiress, Rebecca Greenleaf and suddenly lost interest in the verbal brickbats he had been exchanging. He met her on March 1, 1787; by the seventh he addressed her as "the sweet Miss Greenleaf". By the ninth, she was in his precise use of words, "the agreeable Miss Greenleaf; and by the twenty-second of that month she had become "the lovely Becca". When she left for Boston in June, she and Noah had "reached an understanding".

Two years passed, and in May of 1789, Webster again moved to Hartford, taking up rooms with John Trumbull, and tacking out his sign: *Noah Webster, Jr., Attorney-At-Law.* A little business, and the prospect of royalties led him to write "I think it prudent and best to marry as soon as a house can be obtained and furnished". The marriage took place in October. The bride's father gave the newly-weds one thousand dollars with which to buy furniture. Rebecca spent the money on chintz, china and looking glasses, and discovered she had nothing left for the "best room" and the kitchen in their Hartford home. Her wedding dresses had cost a hundred dollars more, and this Webster had to pay from his own pocket. When she learned what she had done "she cried as if to break her heart." She was twenty-three at the time, Noah was thirty-one, and he wrote in his diary "I am united to an amiable woman, and, if I am not happy, shall be much disappointed."

"The lovely Becca" presented Noah with four "angels" and a son who "confessed a native imbecility of mind". But he maried into a fine Virginia family, and although ill-fortune dogged him throughout life, still managed an exuberance and elasticity that kept his heart bouyant in a continual sea of troubles.

The success of the Blue-Backed American Speller enabled Noah Webster to devote full time to the preparation of an American dictionary. Being a man with a very low boiling point, he had become irritated at the English dictionaries which ignored the United States and its thousands of new and unique words. He swore he would produce an American one despite the fact he was forty-eight years old and the world of letters, so imitative of the English, resented the growth of Americanisms—and thought that there were "words enough already" in the present dictionaries!

Noah moved into the sumptious white clapboard mansion in New Haven which Benedict Arnold had built for his first bride. It was an elegant house, paid for by a million spellers sold each year. It had portico, and pillars, and a marble fireplace. But when the War of 1812 broke out, Noah fled inland fearing a British invasion. He took his growing collection of Indian and frontier words with him.

He worked on it for 20 years, several of which he spent abroad. The first edition, in two volumes, was sold for $20 a set. Twenty-five hundred were printed. The edition was sold out, but there was no profit in it. In 1840, when Webster was over eighty years old and close to death he mortgaged his fine home to bring out a second edition. On his death in 1843 George and Charles Merriam bought the rights, prepared a new one volume edition which sold for $6. This took immediate hold and "the presence of a Webster dictionary in almost every literate household dates from this year" (1847).

For a while Noah lived in Amherst, and when the college opened was made first President of the Board of Trustees. But eventually he returned with his family to Connecticut, to dabble in the political world, serving for a term in the Connecticut Assembly, the House of Representatives, and later as a county judge. But he devoted most of his last years to his study of language. His family seems to have been of similar literary bent. Though Noah Webster's family was in the background his whole life, at least two of his relatives understood his driving force. A son-in-law, Professor Chauncey A. Goodrich wrote a "Memoir" of his life; and in 1912 his grand-daughter Emily E. F. Ford published some "Notes on the Life of Noah Webster."

The dictionary with 12,000 words and 30 to 40 thousand definitions that had not appeared in an earlier dictionary gave us our American language. Webster's concept of American spelling remained to tickle others. Theodore Roosevelt tried to fit it in government papers a half-century after Webster's death. Andrew Carnegie the Scot steel tycoon, gave money to establish a new spelling. George Bernard Shaw added it to his bundle of causes. But that is not the true measure of his greatness.

A likeness of Noah Webster Jr. can be seen today in West Hartford's center. The somewhat fabulous sculptor, Krorczak Ziolkowski, came to Town just before World War II, and amid a storm of controversy created the grim-visaged heroic figure that looks solemnly on passing students, on their way to school to study of the American language.

Ziolkowski, bare to the waist, shouting mild profanities across the green, hacked furiously away at the marble, selling chips to his awe-stricken gallery. When the statue was finished, the community and Ziolkowski stood off and looked at each other, each one sure that the other one was adrift. The comparative peace of the war intervened, and after he returned from military service, the sculptor, who had organized the Noah Webster Drum Corps, packed his tools and his drums and departed for the west, where he set himself to carving a statue of the Sioux chieftain, Crazy Horse.

The fabulous Noah Webster, Junior, was West Hartford's most famous son through the 275 years since Stephen Hosmer arrived. But many another celebrated citizen has called the Town his home. The careers of several are told in other chapters but some by nature and by accomplishment are in the Webster tradition. There were Benjamin Myrrick DesJardins of Gin Still Hill, for instance; and Bernard Caya of Frenchtown; and Yung Wing, West Hartford's own Mandarin!

Benjamin DesJardins came close to fame, but only got as far as West Hartford! He was born in Michigan, grew up in the middle west, and began his inventions in Chicago. An early experience in hand-setting type and the necessity for making each line even by varying the spacing by hand between each word moved DesJardins to invent a machine that would automatically space out the words. He succeeded in getting the famed map maker Willam Rand to help finance him; but before he could complete his work, fire destroyed his plant.

DesJardins decided to come eastward and pick up some Yankee ingenuity—some of its machine tool know-how. He set up a factory in Manchester, capitalized it at half a million dollars, and was all set to revolutionize the printing business, when other inventions beat him to it. But he had a headful of other ideas and inventions. He perfected an adding machine attachment for typewriters; a scale that calculated the value of the goods being weighed upon it; and amazing cryptograph which was used in the World War to code and decode messages. Working with John Underwood, he got seven patents on typewriter refinements and nine on adding machines. He had a home on Washington Street, and then he built his big summer house with its marvelous view on Gin Still Hill. He named it Buena Vista —and now the whole hill bears this descripton. At the time of his death in 1937 he was working on some basic television ideas —and also on a perpetual electric clock.

Like many inventors he was forever at the mercy of skillful promoters, and many times he surrendered for a pittance—while in need of operating capital—inventions upon which others fattened.

However, with his wife, Cora Snyder DesJardins, he found happiness on his hill; enjoying his early day photography, his gardening, and his poetic talent. Childless, the DesJardins took a great interest in the Baptist Church at the Center, and the inventor became Sunday School superintendent.

DesJardins, ironically, had asked the trolley line to install a little shelter on the hill so the children would be sheltered. He would walk down the hill and take the car to town himself. Later when the trolley line was taken up, he would use the Unionville bus. In the dusk of an October evening, coming back from a 79th birthday party, Benjamin DesJardins alighted from the bus near the site of the old shelter, looked both ways, and then stepped into the path of an unlight-

ed car. He died on his way to the hospital, a little-known figure, but one who helped make history.

The DesJardins family came from Canada by way of Michigan. Bernard Caya made the hop direct. For an ambitious young fellow like Bernie, a carpenter's wages in Quebec province back in 1867 seemed pretty. slim. The wages of war-boomed Hartford looked mighty attractive to the seventeen-year-old "Canuck". His skill and his industry brought him some measure of success in Hartford home-building. He was also quick to see the possibilities in West Hartford. At that time, as the Gay Nineties drew near, much of the excitement in Town was to center around the "Point" where New Park and Oakwood avenues meet. There the Charter Oak Park rose to draw crowds of 50,000 for the Fall fairs.

From the Hayes's, whose farm was a landmark in that area, Bernard Caya bought 11 acres of land and moved his family temporarily into the old farm house. Children were arriving regularly. Eight young Cayas were born here, and the other six at Mrs. Caya's home in Canada where she went to visit from time to time. Builder Caya put up his own house on Prospect Avenue and it gave Caya Avenue its name. Son Wilfred's name was given to Wilfred Street.

Then Caya began to boast some about West Hartford to his French and French-Canadian friends and fellow workmen. His good friend Stephen Manseault built just up the street. Albert Boulanger came out from Hartford on the trolley, and breathing the fine "country air," decided to build nearby. Boulanger gave his name to a street. So did the Levesque family. Little neighborhood stores sprang up. A fancy hotel filled "the Point."

Things went so well, Caya began to look around for more land. He got to be a familiar figure in Henry Whitman's town clerk office where deeds and mortgages were recorded. Along the border of the old Velhage farm he bought another 28 acres. He sub-divided these farm lands into residential lots, selling them for as little as five dollars down, and five dollars a month. The third-rail trains brought many out to see the Caya development.

As the area grew, many other French names began to crowd the street directory—Wiellette, St. Pierre, Pierrier, Morissette, Cadoret, Lavie, Dauphinais, Baedor, Boisseau, Dionne—until that little segment of the town earned its nickname, "Frenchtown." On their big skating pond, and in the little school which long occupied the southeast corner of Flatbush and Oakwood Avenues, the children spoke English, but in many of their homes they heard nothing but French. Even today, Bernard Caya's grandson, like the many grandsons of other West Hartford French settlers, is no stranger to the tongue of France.

The plaque saluting the World War II service of the men from that corner of West Hartford proudly bears the label "Frenchtown Honor Roll." The names below it tell the story of the neighborhood. The farms are gone, as are the hardy builders who gave the section its character. Before Bernard Caya died in 1930, at 80 years of age, he saw the streets build up to the west with the kind of single homes which he knew to be the American's most prized possession. He knew he had made his indelible mark on the Town he had come to live in.

Local settlers, like all New Englanders, moved out in a great fan and helped colonize the whole of America. Some even went to far, exotic sections of the world to bring Nutmeg light to "lands of darkness." By the same token, they came to West Hartford from all over the country, from many exotic ports of call in the world beyond American shores. The insurance industry attracted men from the whole nation; machine tool plants attracted men like DesJardins who came to learn a trade, to seize the opportunities Connecticut industries offers smart young fellows. And they came for less common reasons.

A century and more ago, in a tiny Chinese village by the name of Nam Ping, a small boy was born who was destined to be the first of his race to graduate from Yale, the first of his race to live any length of time in West Hartford, before he returned to bring the Christian culture to his home in China.

Yung Wing's father sent him to a mission school. Yung went on to graduate

from the first English school in China which was run by a Yale graduate, Samuel R. Brown. Yung became one of Brown's favorites and brought the boy and two others with him to America in 1846. What a stir Yung Wing made when he turned up in the East Windsor Congregational church where Mrs. Brown's father was pastor!

The boy finished Monson Academy in Massachusetts and he resolved to stay on in America. He found friends who helped him through Yale on a slender budget. Not an outstanding student, he attracted much attention, however, for his mastery of English. Dr. Horace Bushnell went to Yale to see the Chinese boy graduate, so impressed had he been with Yung Wing's writings in a Chinese paper. The year was 1854, the year West Hartford became a separate town.

Plight of his home-land weighed on Yung Wing's mind throughout his undergraduate days. So he went home, relearned his native tongue. Near his home in Canton was the execution ground where in 1865 a heartless viceroy drenched the ground with the blood of 75,000 people who had attempted rebellion. The mountain of slaughtered corpses so shocked Yung Wing that he dedicated his life to raising the living and educational standards of the Chinese people so they could weed out the corruption in their government. After a short business career, including a nearly fatal effort to bring boatloads of tea down a bandit-infested river, Yung was assigned by the powerful viceroy to come to America, buy machinery, bring home, and set up the first machine shop in China. It became an arsenal. For this exploit Yung was made a Mandarin. Yung Wing was able through these contacts to get the Chinese government to spend a million and a half dollars each year to bring Chinese boys to America for schooling.

In 1872, Yung picked Hartford as the center of this great educational adventure. He built the headquarters for the Chinese Educational Mission in the United States on Collins Street. Year after year, 30 boys arrived from China, were put into Connecticut homes through the Mission and studied in Hartford and West Hartford public schools. Eight years later, in 1880, Yung the Mandarin built a fine home on the corner of Prospect and Fern Streets, and began to take a lively interest in the affairs of West Hartford.

He lived in West Hartford for a few years with his wife, daughter of Mrs. Mary Kellogg, and then his dream collapsed. He had been named Assistant Chinese Minister to the United States, but a conservative regime took over in China, and the Hartford idea was abandoned. Mark Twain, the presidents of Yale and Harvard, and a host of other prominent New Englanders protested, but to no avail. Yung went back to China to fight this unhappy decision, but without success. Returning to West Hartford, he found his wife seriously ill. Within two years she died, leaving two sons, Morrison Brown Wing and Bartlett Golden Wing. The Mandarin's Yankee mother-in-law kept house for the bereft family until Wing was recalled to China, leaving one son in Yale University, the other in Hartford High.

In 1898, the Emporer Kwang Su was deposed, the men of reform around him, including Yung Wing, had to flee to the protection of the British, then back to America. Yung Wing died in 1912, but his dream lived on in the young Chinese who went back to their homes from America, transplanting a bit of Western culture to the Orient. When the day of liberation comes for China, it could well be brought about by those, among many with similar backgrounds, whose families taught them the moral precepts and political freedoms they had gotten as a result of the laboring in the vineyard of the West Hartford Mandarin, Yung Wing.

X. BOYS IN BLUE

NEWS of the bombardment of Fort Sumter sent the cities and towns of the North into a frenzy. Typical of the reaction was the *Hartford Courant's* call to arms; after an attack on the south for wantonly committing "the greatest crime since the crucification of our Saviour," it said.

"Let the South remember that they who live by the sword are sure to die by the sword; and that any temporary advantage that the fortune of war may give them, though pleasant to their palate for the moment, will prove bitterer than wormwood and gall in their bellies. Let not him who putteth it off; but may we all, sobered by the grim reality of internal war, gird up our energies and quit ourselves like men. It is sweet to die for one's country; and never had a mortal a better cause than that which now summons all who feel themselves to be men, to rally round the flag of our fathers. Men of Connecticut, TO ARMS!" The first of a long roster of West Hartford men to "rally round the flag" were Buell Root and John C. Sternberg, who signed up on April 22, 1861, in the three-month enlistment of the First Regiment Connecticut Volunteers.

John Sternberg was one of four brothers who joined the Union Army. They were the sons of a German lawyer who fled his native land after the collapse of the Revolution of 1848 and came to a farm in the area of present day Buena Vista Park. There the father lived in semi-retirement. John's brother, Francis, became colonel of a New York regiment; another brother, Charles, was killed at Antietam. Brother William was captured and endured the miseries of the miserable Andersonville prison, but both came home after the war.

John and Buell Root, who was later to become captain of Company D of the 22nd Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers, were hustled with the newly formed regiment to Washington and took part in the first battle of Bull Run. Hopes for an early victory were dashed by this Northern defeat. The 90-day regiments were mustered out, although many of the men re-enlisted. Also at Bull Run were two West Hartford men, Alanson Welles and John Wright, who, two weeks after Root and Sternberg, joined the colors. Their regiment was the Third Volunteers, another 90-day enlistment.

On February 20, 1862, the First Cavalry left West Meriden and joined the war in the bloody battle at Franklin. Hiram Elmer, married to Cynthia Tuttle, who had given him two small sons, had promised his wife he would not enlist. But one August day, the first year of the war, he took a wagonload of sweet apples from the West Division to the Hartford market, and was so stirred by the war atmosphere, that he came home and told Cynthia he had answered "Father Abraham's" call.

The conflict between North and South was not new to Hiram; he had gone to Kansas before his marriage with a band of New Haven colonists, supplied with Bibles and Sharpe's rifles. There the struggle in the fifties, between those who upheld slavery and those who wanted to set the slaves free, had led to such bloodshed that the State became known as "Bloody Kansas".

Hiram Elmer, along with his friend and neighbor Hiram Hurlbut, went off with the First Cavalry. They served under the colorful General George Custer, not only at Franklin, but in several other battles. Once they saw a shot take off his hat; another time his horse was killed from under him as he followed Phil Sheridan on his famous ride from Winchester to Cedar Creek.

"You need to be proud, my sons," Hiram Elmer wrote home, "to think that your Papa was permitted to contribute in some small degree, to assist in the restoration of our glorious Union. I am proud to say that I belong to Sheridan's Cavalry and Custer's Division, which has done more since this campaign, toward ending the Revolution than any other Division or Corps of the Army. The names of Sheridan, "Phil", as we call him, and Custer will be household names in the families of those who rallied around them for generations to come."

Hiram, and his friend Hurlbut, came through the war untouched. Not so fortunate was Julius Deming, disabled in December in the Shenandoah. The Regiment had a glorious record. In twenty-six battles it so distinguished itself that, when it was mustered out at the end of the war, the men were given the privilege of taking their horses home with them. This was an honor accorded no other regiment of the victorious North. Four other West Hartford men were in this outfit, though three of them deserted.

The number of men in the Northern armies against whose name appears the word "deserted" seems strangely high in comparison with today's military standards. Yet there were "extenuating circumstances" during the Civil War just as there had been "peculiar conditions" during the Revolution.

In order to encourage Civil War enlistments, bounties were given. For example, volunteers from Hartford, who signed on for three years were given by the City of Hartford, one hundred and forty dollars from the State (including fifty dollars for volunteering and thirty dollars a year thereafter); twenty-seven dollars from the Federal government (plus a promised $75 when they were discharged), plus $468 in "wages" for three years. If the volunteer had a wife and two children, as did Hiram Elmer, he could qualify for an additional state bounty of three hundred and sixty dollars and a town bounty of two hundred and sixteen dollars. The total came to almost fiften hundred dollars.

This encouraged two results: First off, a man would be unlikely to volunteer unless he got all these bonuses he had coming. That slowed up filling the State and Town quotas until the local bonuses were equal to or better than neighboring ones. Secondly, there were men who made a career of signing in one town, accepting the money and then deserting and going to another town for the same purpose. These men were called "bounty jumpers"; and it is quite probably that a good number of the twenty or so men from West Hartford who are listed as deserters were not really residents of the town in the first place.

Deserting continued all during the war. Even hasty execution of captured deserters did not correct the basic injustice of allowing the rich to buy off, and forced the poor to fight. One West Hartford resident, John Hall, a late recruit to the First Cavalry, "went over the hill" just after he was mustered in and was executed for

desertion by order of the Commanding General; but it had no effect on other boys who continued to desert when the opportunity presented itself.

For the most part, it was the Johnny-come-latelies who deserted. The early volunteers were either killed during their first or second engagement, or seemed to stay alive throughout the whole grim ordeal.

West Hartford had many men "in for the duration." John Day and William Gaines were two of fourteen early West Hartford volunteers in the First Regiment of Artillery, and they served through until September, 1865, taking part in engagements at Yorktown, Hanover Court House, Gaines' Mills, Malvern Hill and Chickahominy. The skillful use of the regiment's heavy siege guns won it the reputation of being the best volunteer artillery in the Army.

It was from this group that Joseph Talcott rose from private to first lieutenant, and it was in this group that William Althorp gave his life for his country at Broadway Landing. The fourteen original volunteers served with distinction. Additional West Hartford men were drafted into this proud regiment, Irish lads for the most. There were few First Artillery desertions throughout the war, due perhaps to the high morale of this fine outfit.

West Hartford men also served in the Second Regiment of Artillery; and if the First earned itself the glory, the second won for itself the unhappy distinction of suffering the heaviest losses for artillery wherever they were engaged. James Stanley was one of those killed in the slaughter at Cold Harbor. William Smith and James Owens were wounded before Petersburg. Young Thomas Foster was killed in Virginia less than two months after he left home.

There were six boys from home in the famed Seventh Connecticut, formed in the summer of '61, and made up in part of some of the "old" ninety-day boys. This was the regiment that was the first to plant Union colors in South Carolina, following the assault on Fort Wagner, although Henry Sperry was wounded, captured and died. Henry Kimberly was killed at Drewry's Bluff, and Burton Hall was wounded severely at New Market Road. The Seventh wasn't lucky for West Hartford.

The Eighth Connecticut got its bloody baptism at Antietam, and lost heavily. The Town's Henry Poyer was disabled. Edward Denning was killed with the 11th Connecticut at Antietam, and Aurelius Fowler of the same outfit was shot up. Antietam was bad news for the entire north, but no town its size suffered such heavy casualties as West Hartford. Charles Sternberg, Morton Cadwell and Arthur Talcott were killed on that bloody angle.

These were men from the Sixteenth Connecticut. Nine men from West Hartford were in Company A of the 16th. Of the nine, three were killed, four were mustered out disabled, and only two came out of it with whole skins. West Hartford men served in every theater. With the 13th, they fought in Louisiana, and then Virginia, and finally became Provost Guards at Savannah. Lt. George Denning, promoted from the ranks, and Sergeant Albert Cadwell served here. With the 20th, two West Hartford boys in blue went through the hell of Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, and the "March to the Sea." A third, Uriah Wells, was killed at Peach Tree creek on the outskirts of Atlanta. There was a fourth man from West Hartford in the twentieth for a while. His name was Private Meunomennie Maimi, but he transferred out after the battle of Chancellorsville, which undoubtedly made keeping the company duty roster an easier job from there on.

The 22nd regiment was organized in September of 1862. West Hartford supplied 22 men to Company D, including its commanding officer, Captain Buell Root. This was a nine months' regiment and was attached to the Army of the Potomac in the lull between big battles. It performed guard duty in the training camp, but was mustered out before it had any opportunity to distinguish itself as a unit. Many of the men did in later enlistments. There were three other men in the regiment from West Hartford, a total of twenty-five.

The twenty-fourth regiment was another of nine months enlistment. It included three Irish companies, one of which was recruited in Hartford. Four of the lads of the

Hartford company set down West Hartford as their place of residence, and one of them, John McCarty was killed in the assault on Port Hudson.

A hard luck outfit was the twenty-fifth, which was also sent to Louisiana. Sixteen West Hartford boys had the bad fortune to draw this one. Corporal Henry Spaulding among them, was one of the six who did not desert. The twenty-fifth got caught in a storm in the bayous, where they were buffetted around for days. They went for a month without a change of clothes during the siege of Port Hudson, fought an engagement for forty hours without any rations, and at the bitter battle of Irish Bend, 96 of their men were killed. Apparently mismanagement on the part of command was responsible for a great deal of the regiment's troubles.

Mark these names: William Green, William Clinton, William Gardiner, Jesse Cowles, John Wilson. They were all West Hartford men in the twenty-ninth, and there were no desertions here. This was a colored regiment, and these boys fought hard. The first two men were in Company C which shared with Company G of the same regiment the distinction of being the first Union Company to enter Richmond. From there they went to Texas and completed their three-year enlistments. Commander of Company B of the thirtieth, also a colored regiment, was Captain Richard K. Woodruff, of West Hartford, who died of wounds received when the Petersburg mine exploded.

But undoubtedly the greatest Civil War figure who fits into the West Hartford story was a man who turned down command of the Army of the Potomac after the resignation of General "Fighting Joe" Hooker. This was the brilliant General John Sedgwick, great grandson of the Revolutionary War hero from West Hartford, another General John Sedgwick. The Civil War General was born in Cornwall, graduated from West Point in the Class of 1837, and saw active service against the Seminoles in Florida. In the Mexican War, he won brevets of captain and major. Came the Civil War, he was given a division which he led in the Seven Days, and Maryland campaigns.

Before Chancellorsville, he was placed in command in the Sixth Corps, and later turned down the supreme command, although he did run it in Meade's absences during the Virginia campaign of 1863. At the action of Rappahannock station, Sedgwick, by a brilliant night attack destroyed two brigades of Early's division, and when the Army of the Potomac was re-organized into three corps, Sedgwick was kept in command of his, leading them into the Battle of the Wilderness. He was killed at Spottsylvania, on May 9, 1864, a grave loss to the Union. There are many who believe that had Sedgwick taken command of the Army when it was offered him, he might have shortened the war by several months.

An unusual local scene of conflict was the First Baptist Church. This faith had strong ties with the South, and there were many Southern sympathizers in the sect throughout the North. The rector of the West Hartford church, Dr. Elisha Cushman, was in this camp. So much so, that during the first year of the war the doctor preached a rousing sermon with a strong Dixie flavor. Many of the members of the congregation were disturbed. So was a large majority of the Town's one thousand five hundred Unionists. The following Sunday when the Baptists drove up to worship, they discovered a Confederate flag wrapped around the white steeple.

Curiosity was mixed with indignation. The service was cancelled, and not until later in the week was the sexton able to get the flag down. The culprit responsible for the jibe was never discovered, but Dr. Cushman ended his stay at the West Hartford church the following spring.

Probably West Hartford's most distinguished Civil War veteran was Captain Dan. His annual Fourth of July fireworks display filled his lawn and spilled over into the adjacent Goodman Green. Daniel Gould Francis did not come to West Hartford until 1880, and his official records are listed under Hartford's men of the Grand Army of the Republic. But he became a West Hartfordite in his final years. Through his activities in the Congregational Church the Grange, as justice of peace, and grand juror he was loved by his 1,800 fellow Townsmen.

His identity with West Hartford goes back into the war years themselves. "Cap'n Dan" was one of the men who raised Rifle Company A of the First Connecticut Infantry Volunteers when the first war posters blossomed in Hartford.

After a brief encampment at New Haven and a few short weeks of intensive drill in Washington, just twelve weeks after Dan and his company were mustered in, he was advancing along the Warrenton Road toward a little creek destined twice to run red with blood of brothers. It was called Bull Run. The First Connecticut fought the entire day in an action that see-sawed in their sector. Nightfall found the New Englanders retreating. Ten days later their period of enlistment was over, the men were sent back to New Haven and discharged.

The bitter defeat inspired many young fellows like Dan Francis to rejoin the battle. His friend and company commander, who was to become General and later Governor, Hawley, told him and others that "three months is scarcely time to teach men the facings. We have all been fools; this disgrace ought to teach us a little wisdom." Again under Hawley, Francis helped recruit, this time he became captain. The outfit was the West Hartford Company A of the Seventh Regiment and it had a different story. Dan Francis' company helped plant the first Union colors at Fort Royal, on the soil of South Carolina, where the first shots of the secession was fired. His company did advance picket duty that night, went on later to take part in the capture of Fort Walker. Two weeks later disability forced his resignation. The war was over for Captain Dan.

But for years thereafter, "Cap'n Dan" marched in his blue uniform with the gold braids and the medals he had won, in the town's annual Memorial Day parades with the G.A.R.

Some of the glory, some of the glitter, some of the poignant beauty of American history has passed forever from the scene when the last of Uncle Dan's blue-clad friends marched down the village streets of our nation. This was a generation of heroes.

XI. TOWN FATHERS

THOUGH separated by four wooded miles from Hartford's governing "electors," the farmers who pioneered the West Division were under the firm political control of the City. The Town Treasurer, who was "the husband for the town," collected its western settlement's early taxes. The official Sealer of Leather, and the Customer Master, the Custodiers of the Meeting House, and the Brander of Horses all were elected with the help of the original settlers of the West Division and served these pioneers as well.

Some of the first Hartford officials, like Town Crier Thomas Woodford, moved to the West Division. The two fence viewers, and the two chimney viewers made the round of the West Division on horseback once a month, and fined any farmers they found with dirty chimneys, or without ladders by the side of their house; or if fire was carried out-of-doors without proper covering. There was little equipment to put out a farm-house blaze.

Laws were stringent in the seventeenth century, and stringently enforced. Not to attend Town meeting meant a fine of five shillings. A person guilty of condemning God's word, of that of the minister, was merely censured the first time. The second time he fell from grace, was fined, and had to stand on a block four-feet-high with this sign on his chest: "An Open and Obstinate Contemner of God's Holy Ordinances." And rather than get caught in a third offense it was better to leave the settlement.

Whipping on a car's tail on Lecture Day was a common penalty. Burglary or robbery in the fields or highway brought branding with the letter B. And if the crime were committed on the Lord's Day, an ear was cropped. The second offense cost the guilty one his second ear. Loafers were particularly unpopular, and subject to the law's anger, as there were ordinances against "common coasters, unprofitable followers, and tobacco tasters." The laws even governed the amount that could be paid for labor. A man who paid too much was subject to the same penalty as the man who charged above the schedule. One law read that "No man shall take above four shillings six pence for sawing boards." Such was the pay for a day's labor—eleven hours during the summer, cut to nine in the winter.

Equally spartan were the Sumptuary Laws which forbad extravagance in dress, furniture, food, private expenditures, or any other indulgence that came to the busybodies' notice. The town constable was ordered to observe and take notice of people in "divers ranks" who sported excesses in clothing and instruct them to appear before the Particular Court. Much more serious was the list of crimes for which death was deemed proper. "To worship any other than the true God, or to blaspheme" could bring

hanging. Witchcraft, adultery, stealing a woman or a child, or even those who were "in their carriage stubborn or rebellious," all could be called to the extreme penalty. In England there were 160 crimes for which death was handed out, in New England only a fraction of this number. "How merciful, how moderate," declared an early writer of Hartford history.

Curiously enough, lying brought unusually grave censure because it was considered a "foule and grosse sinne." Adults were thrown in the stocks for it; children of fourteen or under who lied were to receive, in the presence of an officer, proper punishment at the hands of their parents or "master".

The masters were those artisans who had young boys in apprenticeship—not the slave owners—although there were Negro and Indian slaves in West Hartford until long after the Revolution. The names of seventeen appear in pre-Revolutionary records of the church, among them the celebrated slave Ned. The eighteenth century slaves of this area had the belief that when they died they would change into birds and fly away to Africa. But old Ned was deathly afraid that Daniel Hooker, who had the reputation of being a crack shot, would shoot him down. So Ned used to say he would become a wild goose that could "fly a' high, and Dan Hooker he no shoot me."

Some of these slaves achieved a measure of fame by being elected black governors of the State. It was the custom up until 1820 for the Negroes to have " 'Lection Day" on the Saturday following the regular election, and a colored "Gubernor" would be selected from among his brethern by popular vote. He needed to be a man "quick to decide ready to command, able to flog, and belong to a master of distinction." He had aides, a great parade, and a fancy barbeque in his honor. Colonel George Wyllys' slave, Quaw, was a "Gobernor," and so was Peleg Nott, "a first rate feller" who superintended the West Hartford farm of his master Jeremian Wadsworth. West Hartford's most distinguished Negro was Lemuel Hayes, the colonies' first colored preacher of prominence. Hayes was born in the West Division in 1753, abandoned by his white mother, and raised by an unremembered white farmer. He volunteered for the Ticonderoga Expedition, and upon returning from the war went into farming. He taught himself Latin and Greek by the fireplace and was ordained a Congregational minister in 1785. Hayes settled in Rutland, Vermont, where he preached in the Congregational Church for 30 years, greatly mourned on his death in 1833.

The Green Mountain men were a good deal more independent that the "Steady Habit" Nutmeggers, and in all probability Lemuel Hayes' influence was confined to the pulpit. His fellow preachers in the Fourth Church of Christ in the West Division were, by contrast, almost a law unto themselves during the early years. Take the first "law suit" in the Town. It was for libel over a lie, a serious offense.

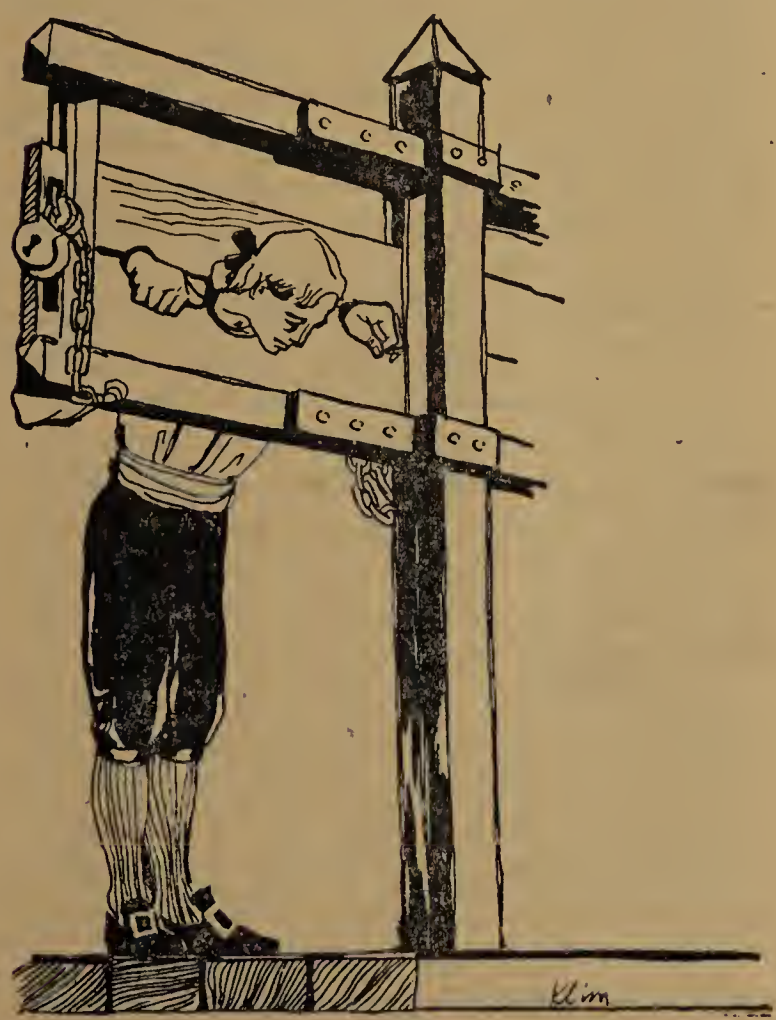
Ebenezer Mix and Thomas Hosmer, grandson of the first man to buy property in West Hartford, lie near each other in the old North burying ground, but they were far apart in life. Hosmer, a deacon in the church, became critical of Farmer Mix. He spread his comments widely about Town. Ebenezer didn't like it. One Sunday in February, 1759, when the Reverend Nathaniel Hooker started up the stairs to his pulpit, Ebenezer Mix handed the pastor a note charging Thomas Hosmer with reporting "that which is false and contrary to truth." Mix urged that due process be issued against Hosmer and he be "dealt with according to the rules of Church discipline." It was bad enough to call a man a liar, but more so a deacon. Counter charges were blasted at the unfortunate Mr. Mix. The deacon had the right people on his side and could produce a certificate signed by Ebenezer Sedgwick and Deacon Abraham Merrills, in which all three swore they had called at the Mix farm but that he had refused to hear them out.

So the church called a meeting. Mix declared that everybody knew what the argument was about, therefore no need to produce any evidence. He pled not guilty to any libel in the letter he had given the pastor. But the congregation thought Mr. Mix acted a bit hastily. First, he should have tried to make friends with Hosmer, and if the latter had really lied, he "might have brought him

to repentance in private and so have gained his brother." Furthermore, it was felt that Ebenezer had slipped in the letter under such public circumstances it was assumed he was trying to have old Hosmer saddled with a scandal before he could be justly tried. And lastly, Mr. Mix hadn't openly revealed exactly how Mr. Hosmer had wronged him "so that Hosmer was denied the opportunity of vindicating himself."

For this unchristian act Ebenezer Mix was disqualified from Church communion until he made satisfaction with Thomas Hosmer, and with the Church in general. But Mr. Mix was in no mood to humble himself, and apparently he died before he cooled off enough to be taken back into the faith.

Throughout colonial times, murder was rare except among the Indians. But there were a surprising number of imprisonments for counterfeiting of money. Beyond this, the most serious indictment brought into the early criminal courts was, of course, that of witchcraft. There were seventeen from the river towns charged with being in league with the devil. Nine were residents of Hartford, and three of these were executed. The very first put to death for witchcraft in all New England was the unfortunate Alse Young of Windsor. The second victim, Mary Johnson of Wethersfield, boldly confessed she had been "familiar with the Devill" and Cotton Mather wrote that "her confession was attended with such convictive circumstances that it could not be slighted." She was hanged on Gallows Hill on the Albany Turnpike east of the present Town boundary. Since the great wave of witchcraft hysteria came in 1647 and passed by 1662, the West Division's lack of witch stories is easily accountable.



Early criminal courts were the Particular Court, the General Court and the Superior Court. Quarterly sessions were adopted in 1642, and trials by jury were customary in criminal cases. The jury might be six instead of twelve, and although the judges made strenuous efforts to get unanimous verdicts, a decision could be rendered by two-thirds of the jury. Among the judges of the Particular Court were George and Samuel Wyllys, Haynes, Hopkins, Whiting and Talcott, all of whom were to have descendants in the West Division. According to the existing laws, their verdicts were just.

They had their 19th century counterparts in the justices of the peace, elected by the Town meetings after the separation from Hartford in 1854. Since the fees were small, often the "J.P." jobs went begging. At times the farmer who accepted this homegrown judicial role would insist that the arresting constable, the defendant and the witnesses come into his field where, seated on his plow, the farmer handed down his verdict. Defendants often complained they were tried not by the law, but by personality and prejudice.

After a time, some of the justices came, by interest and talent, to sit as minor trial judges in the old Town Hall where prisoners were kept in a basement dungeon. And as the Town grew up, Leonard J. Collins became the first regular judge in 1923, the first of eleven men who have presided in the years since over the weekly Town Court sessions. The Centennial year found the docket crowded with as many as fifty traffic, criminal and civil cases which had to be settled each week on the spot or referred, in instances of major offenses, to the Superior or Common Pleas courts of the State.

Although West Hartford has had five murders, solved and unsolved, most of its crimes have been more humdrum. It made news in 1850 when the home of Benjamin Belden on the corner of Farmington Turnpike and Mountain Road was broken into while the family was away. "Wearing apparel, money and notes to the value of $400" was stolen, but "the burglar was pursued and arrested in the woods about a half mile from the house." Mr. Belden recovered everything but $4 and the culprit was thrown in jail.

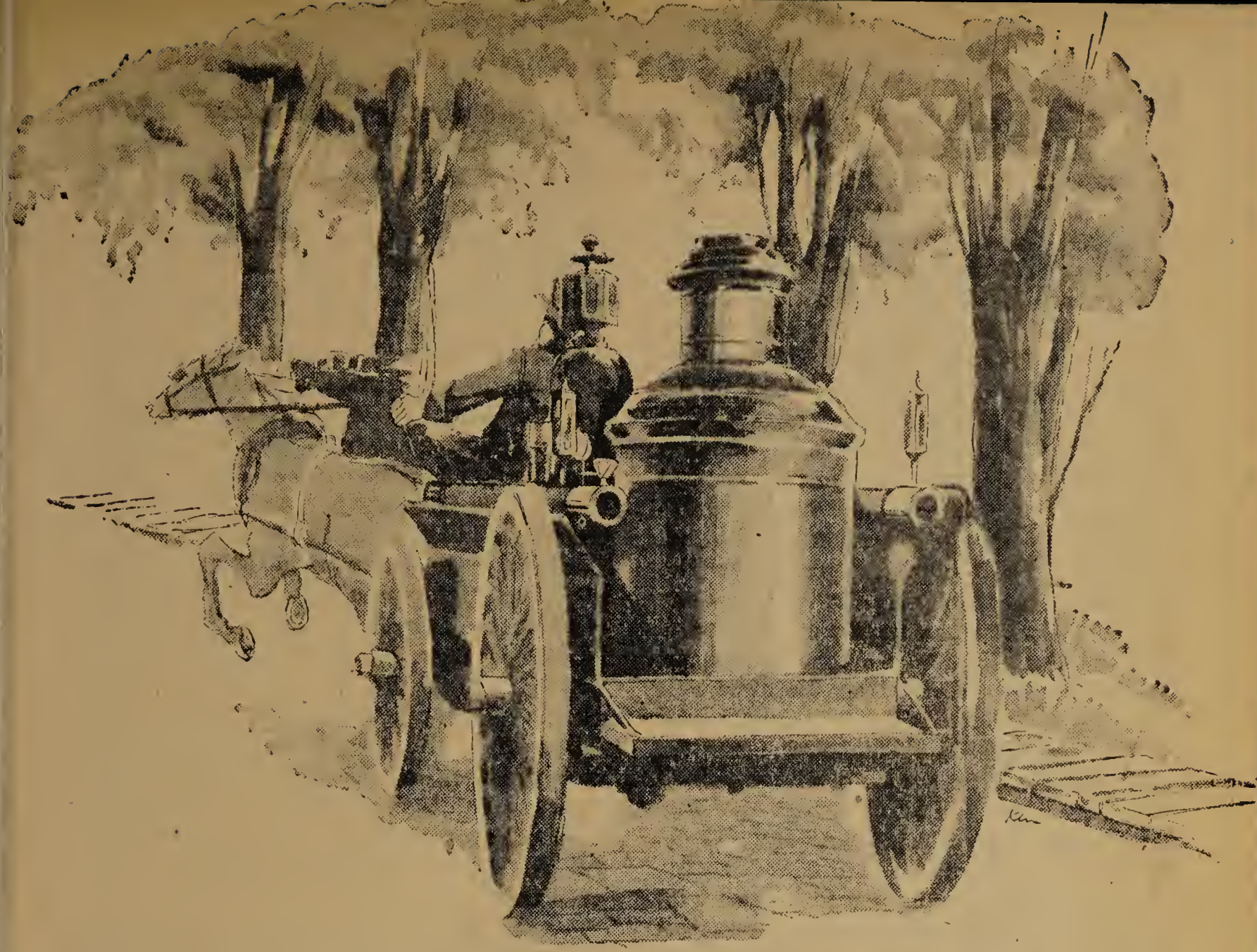
Later that year came a mysterious event for which an Irish servant girl was also committed to jail. On July 21 the pastor's barn on South Main Street burned down in the afternoon before the volunteer fire buffs could put it out. The barn had been set on fire the previous evening, but the small blaze had been discovered in time to save it. Two fires within twenty-four hours suggested arson, and suspicion came to rest on the Reverend Seward's maid. She was arrested by the part-time constable, for the Town's full-time constable was not appointed until 1898.

Nursery-owner James Livingston, the new constable, kept law and order for nineteen years at the turn of the century, taking his job seriously but with great feeling for the accused. He fed prisoners out of his own pocket, even though he collected only one dollar from the Town for each arrest—and that only when the offender was found guilty. But he had no sympathy for drunks who beat their wives—he thought so much of Mrs. Livingston, the mother of his thirteen children. A short while before his death in the early 1930's, Jim Livingston recounted as one of his most celebrated cases his catching of a banana push-cart peddler who was spiriting off, under the cover of his wagon, valuables he had stolen from homes around Town. He might not have had such troubles today, when all peddlers have to carry a police license.

In 1917, when the Legislature made selectmen of the Town a board of police commissioners, they naturally put Jim Livingston on the staff, and in 1921 Town Manager B. I. Miller made him a regular on the Town's first real police department staff. In 1923, the Town numbering 10,000 souls, the one-man constabulary had grown to eight men who reported to headquarters in the basement of the old brick Town Hall on Farmington Avenue and North Main Street, which was torn down in the late 1940's. It was the year after Joseph F. Grogan was named chief of police. He had been a traffic officer, suddenly elevated to an administrative job which called increasingly for more formal education, more leadership, and more reliability. In his seventeen years he had built up the department to thirty regular officers, seven cruisers and five motorcycles. But his regime collapsed in 1939 when it was discovered the chief was involved in illegally borrowing from the police widows' fund. His arrest was credited to two of his own men whom he had trained as investigators.

Joseph Grogan was succeeded by thirty-seven-year-old Police Chief Walter Sandstrom, who had been a member of the force for thirteen years and had just completed a course at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the Centennial year the quiet, sandy-haired father had a department of 83 men, including 54 patrolmen and a fleet of radio squad-cars. These shiny autos were a far cry from the horseless patrol wagon which Hartford loaned the Town for a local minor police raid half a century ago. It made such a buzzing noise that it too well advertised the arrival of the constable. Since Chief Sandstrom was graduated from the FBI school, the first local enforcement officer to do so, three others have been sent, and two traffic officers have completed the Northwestern University Traffic Institute.

Three police episodes, punctuating the past fifteen years, still make spines tingle. In the fall of 1932, Joseph Kapinos, a watchman, was murdered in his shack by the quarry on Avon Mountain. Clues were meagre, but Chief Sandstrom uncovered a promissory note involving another Polish laborer and this scrap of paper led to his trial and conviction. The following year an unrelenting sixty-eight-hour investigation into a hit-and-run death on Albany Avenue near Colony Road brought the conviction of a nineteen-year-old for running down a pedestrian. Curiously, the Town's first traffic death came at the turn of the century when Constable Livingston's seven-year-old son ran



into the path of an electric car driven by a prominent woman from Hartford. A downtown court exonerated her. And as the Town neared its hundredth birthday, the amazing tabloid story of a confidence man, married five times, who was found dead in his Farmington Avenue house with a local housewife, came as a reminder that the friendly policeman who helps school children across busy highways must also be a competent, highly-trained officer and investigator.

The Town's fire department is not even as old as the police department. It had its formal birth on March 1, 1937. Before that, fire protection came from the Fountain Hose Company, the East Side Fire District, the Center Fire District, the Quaker Hose Company, and the Elmwood Fire District. The only difficulty under this divided responsibility was that each district was taxed for its own fire protection (and also for ash and garbage collection if the fire district handled that too). If you had happened to live in the wrong edge of your district, your house might have burned brightly before the fire company down the street would help put it out. These small district fire-fighting squads were naturally not equal to all the alarms that were sounded with the bell in the Congregational belfry. In 1907 four houses along Raymond Road burned to coals and others were "very badly injured" after fire broke out in the blacksmith shop by Trout Brook on an icy winter's night. No lives were lost. The following year there was a giant blaze at the Goodwin Brothers pottery along the railroad tracks in the southeast corner of the Town. The three-story main building was gutted and razed, and other buildings were wiped out. Only the small brick office survived. Five years after the fire districts were put together, near midnight of January 2, 1942, the sixty-year-old grey stone Congregational Church burned down, completely gutted. That week the Central Theater was showing "One Foot In Heaven," in which a church parsonage mysteriously burned down. Late-goers came out to discover the spectacular church fire on the corner.

The first of the old fire companies, the Fountain Hose Company, was organized in 1879 with membership limited to twenty-five, and monthly meetings with a fine of twenty-five cents if you didn't come. That very first year the company put a hydrant on the Green in the Center, and Chief Henry J. Eaton of the Hartford fire department, elected an honorary member of Fountain Hose because he grew up in Town, turned on the water through a long leather hose. Cheers came up from the people who had gathered. They were glad to take part in the lawn festivals and the dances which raised funds to buy uniforms and equipment. In return, on dry summer days, the fire truck went around laying the dust on those streets it could reach from the hydrants it had installed. In 1915 a second-hand Pope-Hartford truck was bought, the same year the new East Fire District boasted a new Triple American La France engine, and the new Quaker Hose came up with a rebuilt delivery wagon, hand-drawn, with five hundred feet of second-hand hose and twenty-five leather buckets.

"In keeping with the progress of the time," the original apparatus was soon out of date and had to be replaced by a Mitchell touring car, rebuilt into suitable hose and apparatus truck. But new equipment had to be added until the poor little Mitchell had to give way to a 1919 Pierce-Arrow, bought after a series of money-raising clambakes. In gratitude, the Quaker Hose company made a practice of hauling stalled cars out of the mud.

The last fire district to be organized was the South or Elmwood District. It opened for business, but only within rigidly prescribed borders, on November 21, 1921, with the delivery of a Maxim M-3 triple combination hose, chemical and pumping engine—the last word!

Not all the streets were protected by the three regular fire districts, hence the need for the volunteer Quaker Hose and Fountain Hose companies. The cost of fire protection varied in each district, from an added two to five mills on the tax bill. When the Town bought the fire districts in 1937, property owners were repaid in tax exemptions until the agreed price for the equipment contributed by their districts was fully repaid to them. While no new stations had been added since the Town took over, in 1954 a fifth station was in the making for the Bishop's Corner area to supplement those on Prospect Avenue, New Britain Avenue, Brace Road and Bloomfield Avenue.

In the annexation fight of 1923-24, when Hartford wanted to gobble up the suburbs, Hartford's Representative Mary Hooker claimed that West Hartford was still in the bucket-brigade stage. Senator Huntington Meech, treasurer of the West Hartford Center Fire District, rejoined, "We do not want or need any more fire or police protection, and have just spent $10,000 for a new hook and ladder truck." But that wasn't quite the way the South District felt about it. Chief Thomas Donnelly recalled later that many of the old-timers never would forget the old set-up. "Especially in the South District," he said, "where there was a tie-up with the Hartford fire department, the men were really district-conscious. They considered the men of the other two districts yokels. 'West Hartford Firemen,' they called us."

In 1829 the village postoffice was at Aaron Goodman's tavern, where he set aside a niche, with boxes marked A to Z, from which once a week West Division farmers picked up their newspapers and now and then a letter. Some considered Goodman's tavern out on North Main Street and the Albany Turnpike a long way to go for a letter, but a quick nip of grog often helped justify the journey. Most of the farmers found it more convenient when, in 1832, Elihu Olmsted was made postmaster and moved the mail into his small store on the northeast corner of Main Street and the Farmington Turnpike. Politics won Nathan Burr the postoffice in 1847 and he moved it cattycorner to his store, over which he had a boot shop. When he got the postoffice, one of his employes was a young man named Leonard Buckland who, nine years later, became the postmaster.

During Grover Cleveland's four-year term, Buckland lost his postmastership to Walter Cadwell, but got it back in 1889. Buckland, his son and his grandson kept it in the family store a total of fifty-seven

years before relinquishing it to the Town's last full-fledged postmaster, Albert L. Lamb, in 1913.

Undoubtedly the most dramatic day in West Hartford's postal history was the one when Leonard Buckland got a letter addressed simply to "Postmaster, West Hartford, Connecticut." Leonard's widowed mother had been poor when he was a boy and so had hired him out to a West Hartford farmer. Mrs. Buckland had moved away, and her boy grew up to leadership in his Town. The letter from a New York law firm told of a lad who had been left behind by a mother whose fortunes had later taken a turn for the better. She was now nearly a hundred, and hoped that the West Hartford postmaster could help her locate her son.

In no time at all Postmaster Buckland was on the train to Manhattan. There was a joyful reunion, and although his mother was not able to come back to West Hartford to live, eventually from her handsome New York apartment came to her great-grandson's home on Clifton Avenue a shipment of furniture and crystal that was far different from anything she had known in her West Hartford days.

In 1918 the West Hartford postoffice was put under the main branch in Hartford, the building was moved west along Farmington Avenue and door-to-door delivery was begun. In 1929, Morton D. Alling, Sr., was made superintendent of the station and the postoffice had its own building at the corner of Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road, when twenty carriers each day made their rounds. There it stayed for twelve years until the building by Trout Brook was put up in 1941. When the lease on this building ran out in 1951, the new postoffice on LaSalle Road was opened to handle a yearly mail flow that under Superintendent Jerome Casey and his 40 carriers, bulks into 900 tons of incoming mail and $325,000 volume of outgoing mail.

As the Town outgrew its village atmosphere, Town services took on scope much broader than housekeeping and mutual protection. In the mid-1930's, as pavement and buildings crowded in on tree-climbing and brook-wading youngsters, it became time to construct modern parks with swimming pools and organized recreation. A committee was selected in 1939 to study what the Town offered in the way of recreation.

This group discovered that the Town's twelve schools had some fifty-five acres that could be used for athletics, ranging from Sedgwick School with "the only ideal play area in West Hartford—baseball, football, track, lawn area for all sorts of games" to Beach Park School with "room only for lawn games." Prodded by this report, the Town formed a Department of Recreation under the Town manager and an advisory board of citizens. The following year J. W. Feldman was appointed Director of Recreation, to be succeeded in 1944 by William T. Davies. In 1949, the department served a total attendance of 219,438 and by 1953 that figure had grown to over 300,000. On the agenda this Centennial year is a third outdoor swimming pool to supplement Fernridge and Beachland park pools at which children for years had to wait in line for hourly swim periods on hot summer days.

A major project, the creation of a Cornerstone Club center for indoor play to supplement the increasing facilities in the new schools, was inspired in 1950 by the boys and girls of William Hall High School. After four years of raising $165,000, the adult Cornerstone Club Committee was awaiting the Town's selection of a proper site for a building in memory of Colonel Edward J. Hickey, long-time West Hartford friend of youth, who built the national reputation of the Connecticut State Police as its respected Commissioner from 1939 until his death in 1953.

Some ideas, such as Woodridge Lake Park, never came through. That opportunity presented itself in 1937, when the area around Woodridge Lake was offered for $40,000. The Town happened to be looking for a place to build a football stadium for high school events, and perhaps rented for professional athletics. The drawings called for a community house, boat-house, bridle paths, picnic areas, camp sites, swimming beaches and a large oval stadium. When it was decided that Woodridge land had too many rocks for a football field, the project fell through and the area was to become one

of the Town's loveliest residential sections. Sterling Field, on more favorably flat land to the west of the Charter Oak School, became the Town't major sporting field, with bleachers for 5,000 people at high school football games.

Plans for reviving the Charter Oak Park were abandoned when it turned into a tax-producing industrial site. The Hartford Gold Club acreage, south of Albany Avenue, was once offered as a park but went begging, into private development. For a time, some proposed that the Town extend Fernridge Park westward toward Mountain Road. While the need for additional park acres in the Town was not felt strongly enough to bring any great changes through Town action, the park area was increased in 1953 through the gift of the widow of William L. Mooney, insurance executive. Mrs. Mooney gave to the Town nine acres to the west of Pleasant Street as "Mooney's Woods." This new park joins Fairview cemetery on one side and on the other is bounded by twenty-two acres of land already owned by the Town for the Braeburn School site.

Through these meadows Trout Brook meanders picturesquely under foot-bridges and past towering beach trees. If the school should not be built on the adjoining property, the whole 31 acres could become West Hartford's largest park, because neighboring Fairview Cemetery is not crowded. Of its 25,000 lots little more than ten per cent have been occupied.

Thus as the fire, police, postal services and public recreation came to the Town, its form of government and its way of life were crystallizing. The present could look back in thanks to those fellow citizens in uniform and mufti who, from the first, set patterns of public service in fair weather and in foul, in time of pleasure and in time of danger.

BUGBEE SCHOOL

XII. THE THREE Rs

FROM the many writings of Dr. Gurdon Russell, Trinity College graduate of 1834, comes a picture of his West Division school days which, like a typical boy, he didn't care much for. His happiest memories were of the times he ran with a band of little ruffians who used to badger a crazy fellow called "Deaf Abbe." This unfortunate, who used to travel through Town in the 1820s helping farmers with their reaping, threshing and flax dressing, had gotten in a row with his wife and she had knocked him on the head with an axe. Afterwards, he was very nearly deaf and almost demented.

"I think the boys teased him somewhat as is their nature with such poor creatures", recalls the celebrated doctor. Abbe had inverted and granular eyelids which led the boys of the West Division to ask him how he got such eyes. "Up to Grandison Barber's picking up potatoes, and I got cow ticks on them", he would cry. But Doctor Russell diagnosed the bad eyes as due to hard cider.

Young Russell did not care for school, except perhaps in the early summer when there were fewer scholars, perhaps thirty or forty, and the windows were usually open. The big boys were out on their fathers' farms working, and so "there were no rough sports, and we enjoyed a quiet and profitable session—when Abbe wasn't around to taunt." Miss Abigail Goodwin was his teacher, "and my recollections of her are very pleasant". The school district was not rich, and she was paid $33.33 a month.

While a sprightly dame like Miss Goodwin might handle the small fry in the summer session, it took a master—and a stout, knuckle-rapping one—to handle the big boys in the winter months. Even a century earlier in the 1700s, the master sometimes got as much as $25 a month, but a whole winter's session would cost no more than $200, even when the master was paid extra for lighting the fire and sweeping out at the close of day.

In 1745, as long afterward, new schools were constantly on the "must" list. That year it was voted to build three new schools to replace the old which had been put up by the 29 incorporating members of the Ecclesiastical Society when it started in 1713. The old North School had burned down, the two others, one in the south end of town, the other in the Center, were worn out. The single door-steps had been trod down by two generations of little moppets, the small entry-ways were crowded with the caps, hoods, and tippets that protected these small children from New England's wintry blasts. To finance these new schools the tax rate was upped to eight pence the pound (about 30 mills to the dollar of property valuation.) A

little of the school money came from payments to the Town for wood, but taxes were the main source of school support.

At first fire-wood was a headache, and no little expense. Soon the "school committee" solved the problem: each scholar was to supply a half a cord within two weeks of fall term. Although the school-yard quickly took on the appearance of a wood lot, it was cheap. The deliveries were closely inspected, and if any parents failed to provide enough logs, their children were deprived "the benefits of the fire". At the end of the day, the tired master went to spend the night at the home of one of his pupils, for free board was part of his pay. He moved from home to home, dividing his time according to the number of scholars each family had in school. Happily for him, the farmers who settled in the West Division had pride to match their thrift. Livestock was often saved for slaughter until it was time for the school master to visit.

The Town's first school program was closely linked with the Ecclesiastical Society which ran the schools through two committees. One, called the "School Committee", handled the administration of the schools. The "Visiting Committee" looked after their cultural and spiritual welfare. The minister, the doctor, the lawyer, and other professional people served on this body which went from school to school, quizzing the pupils on their work and on their catechism, probing the teachers on their understanding and educational skills. By 1780, there were eight schools (five of them along Main Street) and plenty of students to fill them, so the committees were broken down into individual district groups, each handling its own school, and accounts reveal that is when the troubles really began. In 1795, the Ecclesiastical Society turned over its direction of the schools to the Civil government and the schools were put under the wing of the Second School Society of Hartford. But because of heating, janitor, and teacher-housing problems, each neighborhood exerted a great deal of choice in deciding how its school would be run.

When the Town became independent in 1854 and took over its own school system, the faults of the district were deeply rooted. When the State had sold its "western lands" in Ohio and collected a large sum for distribution for local education, the School Societies had gotten firm control of the individual districts, and had the power to hamstring them in many ways. While the Society's "School Visitors" were not supposed to inquire into the teacher's character or training, they still had the power to reject teachers hired by the district. The district committeemen sometimes had motives other than teaching ability. In the old East Division, for ten years parents were particularly attached to one teacher and did a great deal of politicking to elect as school committeemen only those who promised to keep the teacher.

But in some other districts, interest among the voters was often so diluted that, except when a tax was being levied, a quorum could be assembled in an annual meeting only by going from house to house in the neighborhood and routing out voters while the meeting waited.

William Hutchins Hall, whose service to West Hartford as teacher, visitor, principal and superintendent, spanned more than half a century, traced great inequities to the district set-up. Some districts were able to pay larger salaries and provide better facilities. Others lagged. Some wanted a longer school year. Vacations conflicted and no uniformity of schedules could be worked out. One district committee hired a teacher at a very low salary, hoping to save money from funds allotted for current expenses and put it into school repairs. When he found that wouldn't work, he told the teacher to keep school open through July and August to use up the money at six dollars a week.

Everyone close to the school set-up of the new young Town appreciated that it was wrong, but it was tough to change. The School visitor had recommended consolidation as early as 1874; but it wasn't until 1877 that he prevailed upon the Town meeting to accept it even as one idea. A committee was formed, but opposition was so great that not until 1884 was a plan for school district consolidation approved by the legislature and voted.

At that late date a last minute hitch was beaten off. East-siders discovered that

all taxpayers were going to be assessed uniformly to buy the school properties totalling fourteen thousand nine hundred dollars in various districts. Taxpayers in each district were to be credited with a rebate, depending on the valuation of the school property in the district. At that moment the East side had only one school valued at five hundred dollars in contrast to the Center School district's five thousand dollar property. An 1885 rump Town Meeting wanted to upset the consolidation, but were beaten down in a heated vote.

In July of 1885, the Town School Committee held its first meeting. Henry Talcott was elected first chairmen, and T. Belknap Beach, secretary. It equalized teachers' salaries, adopted a calendar, set out to improve the school buildings. Mr. Beach, a public-spirited chemical importer, did more than serve on the Board, he gave the Town the lot on which Beach Park School and its attractive playgrounds were later built. His family had once owned all the land between Asylum and Albany Avenues from Prospect Avenue to Steele Road.

Nothing better symbolizes the three Rs of nineteenth century West Hartford than the little red school-house on Mountain Road, at the head of Sedgwick Road, now being used as the headquarters for the West Hartford Art League. In 1878, the 75-year-old square, squat West School needed replacement, and Adolph Sternberg offered to give a new site, on the south side of Mountain Road across from the old school. Many supported the short move, including Edward Stanley who lived between the old school and the present site of the Buena Vista clubhouse. Some of his less charitable neighbors said he favored the change in order to get more room for his firewood lot. When the controversy on the site couldn't be determined by a vote of the Townspeople, the West School District taxpayers turned to state statutes, and under the law, invited the Farmington School Visitors to decide the ticklish issue.

There was another roar when the Farmington group came to sound out sentiment, and ignoring the local School Visitors, selected the same site where the present building stands. The rumpus quickly subsided. Seven years later, when the nine ungraded district schools were absorbed into one school system, the West School took its place quietly as one of the bustling little units. By 1932, with the new Sedgwick building up the road, the tiny red building had lived its natural useful school life and was glad that on a blustering January night a little knot of people gathered and formed an Art League, renting the old school building at five dollars a month.

Following the Civil War, the old Academy, which flourished for some years before 1840, and then later reorganized and continued in usefulness until 1864, was unequal to the demand for higher education. There was great public pressure for a public high school, but there were many who rejected the idea as being too expensive, especially since it was not required by State statute. Certainly, the town could "not afford a new school building!" was the cry.

Nonetheless, when school opened in September, 1872, the first forty public high students trudged up the stairs to the rented second floor of the district schoolhouse on North Main Street, which in the Centennial year still nestled in partial idleness in the north shade of the Professional Building. Grade Teacher William H. Hall moved up a flight to take over the high school at a year's salary of four hundred and thirty dollars and sixty cents. He helped popularize the idea of a high school education, though there persisted for several years an annual effort to discontinue this frill. At the Town Meeting of 1895, the need for a more adequate high school came to a head. The idea of moving the school to a new building on South Main Street raised violent objections from the residents there. Many other suggestions were thrown out. Mr. Hall, an able compromiser, finally suggested they pay six thousand dollars for the Seyms' property on South Main Street, but that the school itself be built back towards Trout Brook. This measure, too, was violently opposed, until finally the eastern portion of the land was bought and the new Center school was built on the corner of Seyms and School Street, now the Whitman School with the streets becoming Memorial and Raymond Roads.

The high school and grammar school shared this building until 1910, when the high school took it all over. At about that time agitation arose for a more adequate high school building, since the Center school had already been outgrown. But it was fourteen years and many battles later before William Hall High School was built. Key figures in this scrap were Mr. Hall himself, and former State Senator Charles Cook, a dominant behind-the-scenes political figure in West Hartford from 1900 until after World War I. Mr. Cook had a favored site in the area to the northwest of Brace Road, but this was strongly opposed by the School Building Committee. Mr. Cook then shifted his ground and wanted to build the high school elsewhere, anywhere elsewhere, as long as it was away from South Main Street traffic. He even offered to build a four hundred thousand high school at his own expense to the north of the Whitman School and he had the cash to do it. But the present Hall site prevailed at a Town meeting in 1921, and that vote to "continue the high school until further notice" has never been rescinded.

As the Town passed its Centenary, it was wrestling again with the problem of a crowded high school. Facing a high school population by 1964 of more than 3,000, they had, in 1954, decided to build a modern high school for 1,700 students to the south of the Rockledge Country Club. Left for the future was the decision to replace Hall High with a new high school in the north end or to remodel and enlarge the high school in the Center of the Town. Also bandied were ideas for a single campus high school on the Rockledge site or a combination of three high schools, one in the north, one the Center, one the South.

The Town embarked on its second century as a separate Town with an annual school budget of three million dollars (about forty-one per cent of the total Town budget), with nearly nine thousand students in its single high school, four junior high schools from seventh through ninth grades, and thirteen elementary schools. The years from 1945 had seen the school population double, with the Webster Hill, Lloyd H. Bugbee, Louise Duffy and King Phillip Drive Schools built under Superintendent Edmund H. Thorne from Michigan.

The Bugbee School honored the man who had guided the school system as superintendent from William Hall's retirement in 1922 until Dr. Thorne came in 1947. Louise Duffy School, a 26-room elementary building with the Town's first classrooms for handicapped children similarly honored the daughter-in-law of Frederick Duffy for her long service as teacher and appointee to the Board of Education. (The older Whitman School kept alive the contribution of veteran teacher and principal Helen Whitman and the Florence E. Smith School, renamed from "Seymour School", remembered the gratitude of the Board of Education for Miss Smith's long leadership of the building.)

These buildings and all others housing public education in the year 1954, two of them fifty years old and most of them a quarter of a century, represented a replacement value of eighteen million dollars. And in sight was another fifteen million dollars of investment as the likelihood of a twelve thousand school enrollment before 1960 was forecast.

Because of this rapid growth, and the difficulty of keeping school building in step with the need, the school buses in a chartered yellow fleet became by 1954 a familiar Town sight. The chore of transporting more than two thousand five hundred students to and from school each day would have staggered good-hearted Farmer Charles W. Fulton. From his North Main Street farm he used to set out 50 years ago to carry in his wagon, or on sled in wintry weather, a gay load of children around a great loop as far east as the edge of Town, on their way to school in the Center.

From the Revolution on, the Town has had its share of private schools, as well.

From the days of Dr. Perkins and on to the era of the Academy, most West Hartford parents have been interested in seeing to it that their children got the best education—public or private—that the times allowed.

Oldest of present private institutions is Oxford School, founded by little Miss Mary Martin in 1909. Mary Martin came from the Granite State; she was teaching at Holyoke when she visited a sister in Hartford and decided to move here. She spent her spring vacation that year with an old chum, Myra Billings, who was then teaching in a boy's school in Maryland. Together they decided to begin a school of their own. That summer they canvassed the Hartford area. With the help of what Miss Martin called "the inevitable real estate agent" two large frame houses side by side on Oxford Street were purchased. From four boarding students and ten days students Oxford School grew in its first ten years to an enrollment of forty-three boys and girls. "Miss Martin", whose engraved calling card bore only that identification, had been doing it alone since the end of the second year. Her school was bursting at the seams, and so she took over the old Ensworth home on Farmington Avenue. That fall her enrollment was ninety students.

After five pleasant years on Farmington Avenue, the school plant again proved inadequate. Parents and patrons formed the Oxford League to advance the school's interests. Miss Ruth Guernsey was persuaded to come from New York to become the associate principal. Larger quarters were obtained on Prospect Avenue. These added facilities aided the school's growth. Boys, who had been principally in the lower grades were dropped out to make room for more girls of high school age. At one time, as mothers who had gone to Miss Martin's School began to send their daughters there, enrollment soared to two hundred and fifty; but this proved too heavy a load, and so attendance had to be limited to one hundred and seventy-five. The first freshman granddchild of an Oxford graduate will be enrolled in a few short years.

Miss Martin died in 1951, at the age of eighty-seven. She left no elaborate record of her life, for she was wont to minimize her own accomplishments. But the Oxford School, and the long list of women who have graduated into community leadership were all the monument she would have desired. She wrote her own best epitaph in a brief message to the young ladies at the school:

> "We are all recipients of the past. The future lies in our hands, so we must not only complete the unfinished work that lies before us, but must continue the high ideal of the school and contribute as much as we can to the life about us."

George Robert Henderson Nicholson is another who came to the Town bringing with him a love for learning and a burning ambition to pass it on to later generations. From a tutor of children to the first master of Kingswood School was the path of his destiny. Odd is the tie that binds Kingswood to its British namesake in Bath. Many a Yankee soldier knows old Kingswood's ancient walls as the place where much of the top strategy of the Normandy invasion in World War II was planned. From this old University founded by John Wesley was graduated a young man who returned as master of classical languages. This young fellow found time to tutor as well, and when an American family engaged him to tutor their children while they toured Europe, he ended up coming to this country with them. In Long Island he met the headmaster of a school who was shortly to receive a letter from Mrs. Richard Bissell, wife of the president of the Hartford Fire Insurance Co., requesting help in finding a suitable tutor for several Hartford families in the Nook Farms area. When Nicholson was approached he remarked that since his home in England was halfway between Boston and New York, he felt he should have a look at this American town that was half way between Boston and New York. In a short time he had resigned from old Kingswood and set about to establish a new home in the new world.

George Nicholson was not interested in tutoring, but he did tell his Hartford sponsor that he would be glad to start up a school for them. He was then thirty years old, and when he began his "country day

school" in 1916, he started with six students and two masters. On noon of the first day, the enrollment had jumped to thirteen. In 1918, the Bissell family moved to Farmington, and the Kingswood School rented Mark Twain's old home which the Bissells owned. The school grew apace and in 1926 a gift of nearly 20 acres by Dr. and Mrs. M. W. Jacobus brought Kingswood into the "country" of West Hartford. The land had formerly been the White Farm and the hunting grounds of the Hartford Gun Club.

When he died in 1949, the beloved headmaster had seen his idea become an important preparatory school as more of the older boys were enrolled and younger "forms" were dropped. In a three-quarters of a million dollar plant on thirty hilltop acres, 200 young men are being trained at Kingswood each year, with forty being graduated yearly.

At 8:40 each morning there is the service of morning prayer in a chapel that combines the old world atmosphere that George Nicholson brought with him from Kingswood in Bath and the austerity of American public school auditoriums. The ritual, the neatly clipped greens, the full sports program, and the dedication to public responsibility as well as private excellence stand a lasting tribute to George Nicholson, and a reminder of the strange twist of circumstances which brought him at last to West Hartford.

In 1935, when families on the outskirts of Greater Hartford, like the Cameron Winslows, the John Lees, the Ostrom Enders and the William Danas felt the need for an independent elementary school in the area, they brought Mr. and Mrs. William Williamson from the Shuttlemeadow School in New Britain to start the Tunxis School in the turreted old house at the top of the rise as Albany Avenue nears Bishop's Corner.

The creaky house and its problems discouraged the Williamsons. They left the school in the hands of Kindergarten Teacher Florence Greene, who has been its headmistress ever since. She moved it to Outlook Avenue where the children experimented with other Indian names, but "Podunk" and "Suckiaug" were little help and the compromise was The Junior School. The lower grades from the Oxford School were absorbed and willing parents bought twenty-five thousand dollars worth of bonds so the infant Junior School could, in 1937, buy three acres from the Kingswood School and put up a six-room school house on Trout Brook Drive just off Farmington Avenue.

In the post-war years a series of cinder-block buildings was topped off in 1953 with a one hundred and fifty thousand dollars assembly hall and dining room where the maximum enrollment of two hundred and eighty boys and girls can gather with their eighteen classroom instructors and nine special service teachers.

Mount Saint Joseph Academy is another school that began in Hartford and moved out "into the country." Opened in a small cottage on Allyn Street, Hartford, by the Sisters of Mercy, in 1852, it was fifty years before they bought the large tract between Farmington Avenue and Fern Street on West Hill. There in 1902, they laid the cornerstone of the new seminary, and three years later opened classes in the massive red stone structure that has seemed like a medieval castle to more than one wide-eyed freshman. The Mount was a boarding school until its growing popularity began to crowd its three spacious floors. Then, in 1937, applications at The Mount indicated a change to a day school which released dormitories for additional classroom space. Today more than six hundred and fifty students come by train, auto, bus, and afoot from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish homes for a well-rounded course of instruction by sixteen Sisters of Mercy and twelve lay teachers.

The girls are all dressed in trim navy blue uniforms with white collars, the school's only concession to feminine fashion being the hemline which undulates up and down through the volumes of *The Mount*, the school's yearbook. The young girls attend daily devotions in an imposing chapel, draw on a library of ten thousand volumes, and enjoy a wide range of club and athletic programs. Some pursue a college preparatory course, others study nursing or business training. As the vespers bell closes the day's activities at the Mount, a quiet solemn calm settles over this West Hartford seat of sec-

ondary learning—a solemnity that ties a thriving model school to the history of the sisterhoods which are woven into the fabric of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1925, the State Legislature gave a college charter to the Sisters of Mercy at the Academy and in 1932, Mount St. Joseph College was opened at the Hamilton Heights campus until permanent quarters farther out Asylum Avenue could be built. In 1935, two college buildings were opened. The college division of Mount St. Joseph's moved to the new location and the name was changed to St. Joseph's College. There, at West Hartford's 100th anniversary, four hundred women were receiving the full range of college training, about half of them day students, the rest boarding.

At the college were a sizable delegation from South and Central America, particularly Brazil, Panama and Guatemala, because one of the teachers had done her doctorate field work in those countries and had in glowing terms told many a young South American girl about West Hartford and its growing Catholic college.

Hartford College, which, like most of the other local private schools, had its beginnings in the City, and is now a West Hartford institution with its home on Highland Street. In 1933, Bess Graham, educational secretary of the down-town YWCA saw hundreds of girls denied college training because times were tough at home. The "Y" was swamped with applications for the small unsecured loans it made to qualified girls who could not get to college on their own limited financial resources.

Yankee Bess Graham took her problem to Mrs. Luman K. Babcock, the sure-we-can-do-it president of the "Y" who had come to West Hartford from Indiana. "If these girls can't go to college, why not bring the college to them?" they asked one another. Together they found a way.

Mt. Holyoke's able president Mary E. Woolley unlocked their riddle. Launching on a project that had never been tried before, Mt. Holyoke sent members of its staff each day to the Hartford "Y" to conduct classes for the twenty-one girls Bess Graham had selected. Miss Graham filled the post of dean for an extension school, called Mt. Holyoke in Hartford. Moderate tuition enabled many girls from the Hartford area to get top-notch college training for two years. Living at home, they saved money which enabled most of them to go on to Mt. Holyoke or other accredited colleges in their junior and senior years. For five years, Bess Graham and her friends watched their judgment being confirmed. The "Y" quarters were jammed with college students. So great was the demand that Mrs. Babcock told the story to Remsen B. Ogilby, president of Trinity College, and he put his faculty into the extension course experiment. Enrolment reached 500 and classes were held all over town.

By 1939, with the country's economic health on the mend, it was time for the little junior college to strike out on its own. A group, of whom Clement Hyde and Howell Cheney were of the greatest inspiration, decided to create out of Mt. Holyoke-in-Hartford, the Hartford Junior College. Miss Graham and Mrs. Babcock scouted around for headquarters for the new school, and the house at 47 Highland Street looked about right, and so the college moved to West Hartford.

In the decade that followed, the Hartford College liberal course, taught part-time by professors from the leading colleges in a hundred mile radius, has been buttressed with degree courses in nursing and retailing in cooperation with the Hartford Hospital and the large department stores. Of the 500 girls who have gone to class in the converted residence on Highland Street, many have gone on to finish their liberal arts courses at major colleges all over the country.

But the most famous of all West Hartford schools is undoubtedly the American School for the Deaf now located upon a hundred beautiful acres just north of Fern Street. It, too, came from Hartford.

In a garden on a vacation day in 1813, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet was watching his younger brothers and sisters at play. With them was a nine-year-old neighbor. When Thomas spoke to her, she did not hear. Scarlet fever had left Alice Cogswell stone deaf.

The chance Hartford meeting led to the creation of the American School for the Deaf in Hartford in 1817. This school which

has made West Hartford its home, is an imposing milestone in man's concern for others less fortunate. April 15 in the year 1817 is regarded by many as the birthdate of organized philanthropic work in America.

Alice's father, Dr. Mason F. Cogswell, sought a way to help not only his daughter but all who were deaf. He found there were 84 deaf children in Connecticut who were getting no schooling, so he gathered his friends together to search for a solution. Among them was Thomas Gallaudet.

At forty, he had not yet found the perfect life for himself, though he had given generously of it to others. Plagued with poor eyes and weak lungs ever since 13, when his merchant father had moved the family from Philadelphia to Hartford, he went through Hartford Grammar School and Yale with honors and went to work briefly in a Hartford law office. He rebelled at that, tutored at Yale where for four years he contemplated his own contribution to society, and after a brief stint as travelling salesman he enrolled in 1812 at Andover Theological Seminary. In two years he was a minister—without a church—but finally consented to go to Europe for Dr. Cogswell's group and study education of the deaf. In France he found a warm heart in the famed Abbe Sicard who shared his successful techniques and let Gallaudet bring back to America Sicard's friend, Laurent Clerc, the deaf co-founder of the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb. From this Asylum Hartford's street took its name.

The State gave $5000, the men raised the rest and enrolled thirty-three pupils in a year. The directors overworked the self-effacing Thomas Gallaudet almost to death, and finally let him resign in 1830 after he had developed amazingly successful new techniques in communication with the deaf. Though his last twenty years were a continuing disappointment, plagued by ill health which kept even his little school at home from being a success, the school which Gallaudet founded did prosper. In 1921 it outgrew its Hartford quarters and moved to West Hartford, where its quarter of a million dollar budget works wonders with two hundred and fifty boys and girls who have lost their hearing but are not deprived of their education.

XIII. YANKEE INGENUITY

WEST Hartford sprang up where it did, and early grew, because of the little river that threads its way through much of the Town. The settlers knew it as the Northwest River, the farmers called it Noyes River, now it is Trout Brook. But always it is the same stream, forever young yet always flowing purposefully through the same old channel.

A boy in the old Academy saw it through different eyes. In an 1840 school paper he described it as Mine Brook, a "furious stream, so-called because, emerging from certain caverns in the mountain, in its mad way it washed the sediment of particles of ore from the base of a copper mine embedded in the rocks."

Upon this inviting stream, the very first settler in Town [illegible] up his grist mill, straightway began logging off his land and making lumber, too, on North Main Street where the brook crosses. As farmers from Hartford began to settle these new West Division lands, grist mills, saw mills and blacksmith shops opened the Town's eye to the business future, and in the south end where the clay was best suited, potteries and brick-yards began to flourish. In a short generation, West Hartford Yankees were successfully exploiting the Town's three industrial assets—timber, water power and the clay which abounded in much of the area that today is zoned for industry. Small industries quickly got bigger. There was a woolen mill, a textile "fulling" shop, wagon and shoe shops, three brandy distilleries—one for every hundred people at the time of the Revolution—and cider mills galore.

An Englishman had written of pre-Revolutionary Connecticut that all Nutmeggers were "mortgaged to the full to the Bostonians and the New Yorkers," and that they were "very great rogues, no money amongst them, and nobody would live amongst them that could possibly live anywhere else." But still they came, liked what they saw, and stayed to set up their small industries or plow the fields.

That is what happened to the Faxons who came to the New World from England. For five generations there was first a Thomas and then a Richard. Then came Ebenezer, born in Massachusetts in 1749, who came at twenty-one to the West Division because he had heard of the fine clay deposits in the south end. It did not take him long to set up a thriving pottery, and nearby, in 1777, he built the classically colonial Faxon house for his bride, Abigail Pantry Whitman, which graced the northeast corner of South Quaker Lane and New Britain Avenue until it was torn down to make way for the business block there. Faxon, one of the Town's first prosperous industrialists, invited his father to come help him manage the factory. Ebenezer became a captain in the militia that drilled on Goodman Green, and a grandson went to Washington to become chief clerk of the United States Navy under Gideon Welles during the Civil War.

In 1828 Samuel Talcott built a mill near the pottery, where he and his sons carried on a thriving woolen business for years. His outbuildings included a fulling shop where cloth was dressed for market, storage rooms, and a small iron-covered structure still standing near the road. After that industry had run its course, the Elmwood Creamery & Grist Mill took over the spot. Farther to the west, at the foot of "Four Mile Hill" on the road to New Britain, Thomas O. Goodwin had built the Town's first pottery, but it had burned down shortly afterward and it was not until his son rebuilt the pottery in 1832, somewhat to the east, that Goodwin goods became known throughout the region. Henry C. Goodwin's factory had few equals in the area until it, too, was consumed in a big fire many years later.

It was the custom in the days before the Civil War to make up a load of earthenware and peddle it with horse and wagon from town to town. Sometimes Goodwin would travel as far as Vermont, and as soon as his wagon was emptied, high-tail home to make up another load. When the factory burned down in 1867, his three sons bought land nearby, went back into business as the Goodwin Brothers and did famously with three kilns and steam-powered potters' wheels upon which seventy-five hands worked in the new three-story building. To the manufacture of ordinary pottery, sold in the South and Southwest, they added the making of terra cotta designs. Eventually their plant embraced a number of buildings on the south side of New Britain Avenue, but fate struck once more. In 1908, the third Goodwin factory was wiped out by fire.

In addition to the potteries, through the 1800s and before, the saw mills and grist mills offered work for those who did not want to till the soil. Mills sprang up all over Town. A big one was at the entrance to the Morgan Brainard farm on Albany Turnpike, and another where Trout Brook crosses Farmington Avenue. Later Edward Stanley and John Thompson built their saw and grist mill on the brook west of Mountain Road, at the end of a narrow path known as Albany Place. When the reservoir dam broke in 1867, this mill was swept away.

Of the more famous grist mills was Brace's Mill on the west side of Trout Brook near the Center, combining, as was the rule, a grain store where the mill produce was bought and sold. Through its wide doors, bales and bags and barrels where hand-trucked in and out. A few early "industrial" jobs were available, too, in the numerous distilleries. There were four of them along Mountain Road at one time and the name of Gin Still Hill remains as reminder, on the western end of Farmington Avenue, of the Town's heady past. On the opposite end of Mountain Road is another relic of those days, Still Road.

Blacksmith shops dotted the twenty-two square miles of wooded hills and fertile clearings. Not only were horses and oxen shod, tools and chains were mended and tires set on wagons and carts. Another typical little "factory" was George Gates' hand-made churn business in a two-story building at Sedgwick and Tunxis Rds. Cobblers could be found in several convenient locations, generally in an ell off their house where, surrounded by a clutter of lasts and leather, they turned out boots to order. Children sometimes complained that they had two left-foot shoes, so crude was the early footwear, and it was not until the North had to shoe and clothe the Union troops in haste that ready-made shoes and clothing were common.

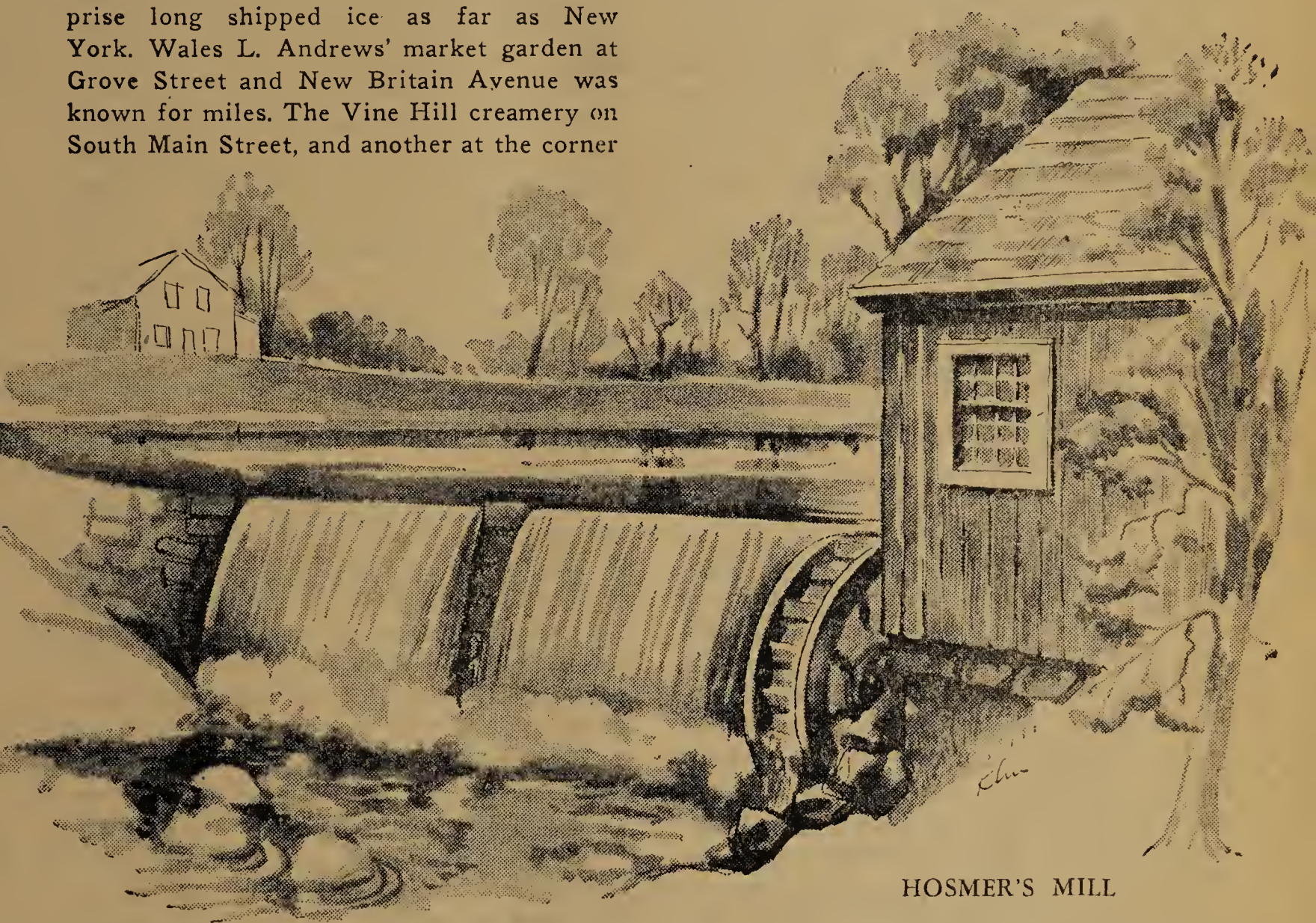
Such were the businessmen of an earlier and more leisurely day when "Tinker" Warner led his lonely life in an old house at Fern and Main Streets. By day he went about on foot with his kit of tools to repair pots, kettles and tinware. On a bigger scale, many tin "peddlars" regularly came through the Town with a horse-cart full of brooms, mops, pans, clothes pins and, so the story goes, "wooden nutmegs" which were pawned off on the unwary.

Tobacco took on industrial stature almost from the first settlement of the Town. Indian tobacco was too bitter for the early settlers, who preferred to mix it with sumac, but it was not too bitter to export. By 1700, tobacco was being regularly shipped out of the county, and at the end of that century, Revolutionary hero Israel Putnam brought back cigars with him from a cruise to Cuba and started a cigar boom in

these parts. Nearly every West Division farmer had his own tobacco patch, and in the evening his wife fashioned crude black cigars, which brought ready sale at nearby taverns. Drovers and draymen smoked them to keep the road dust from their mouths. It was not until shade-grown tobacco for wrappers was brought to the Valley that the little business became a great industry and Joe Bishop could load his tobacco warehouse.

Other small industries gave West Hartford a cosmopolitan air in the last century. Fred Arnold's great ice-cutting enterprise long shipped ice as far as New York. Wales L. Andrews' market garden at Grove Street and New Britain Avenue was known for miles. The Vine Hill creamery on South Main Street, and another at the corner of Mountain Road and Albany Avenue were two of several which supplied much of the milk for the whole area, and were fore-runners of the modern A. C. Petersen Farms.

Along with pioneer industries, the pioneer retailing got under way in the West Division. The post office and the general store went hand in hand, starting in 1832, when Elihu Olmsted succeeded first postmaster Aaron Goodman (whose place was at Bishop's Corner) and added a line of merchandise in the little building at the front of his new house at Farmington and Main Street where the bank stands today. When Nathan Burr got the postmastership he opened a store, too. But it was Leonard Buckland, to whom Burr sold his store in 1856, who became the principal founder of modern-day retailing in West Hartford. His store on the southwest corner of Main and Farmington was not a post-office afterthought. It was the real thing. Many of the farmers, who had welcomed the chance to forget the rigors of the farm by driving downtown to shop, were slow to accept Buckland's efforts. But he won them over, and set the pattern for a century later when four thousand people would daily go to work in nearly five hundred stores and offices in the Town. The few hundreds of dollars of business which passed through the Buckland store its first year were to grow to reach toward seventy-five million dollars annual retail sales in Town.



HOSMER'S MILL

Business growth got great impetus

from the launching of the West Hartford Trust Company by a group of community leaders in 1926. Then, as business flourished, the idea of branch banking replaced smaller local institutions, and today there are six branches of downtown banks in Town.

The success, in the 1780's, of Ebenezer Faxon and his pioneering friends in industry set the standards of ingenuity that have created an industrial capacity in West Hartford which in the Centennial year would ship some one hundred and fifty million dollars of precision products 'round the world. This capacity has been growing constantly since the day in 1892 that the Whitlock Coil Pipe Company was organized, thanks to many things, including the miracle of electricity which the Hartford Electric Light Company brought to Town in 1903, 11 years after Whitlock launched its steam-powered factory. In 1909, a young graduate engineer from the University of Pennsylvania arrived on the West Hartford scene to talk about a job with the Whitlock people.

When lanky Waldron C. Beekley showed up at the plant on South Street along the railroad track he found a firm much in transition. It had been formed seventeen years before by thirty-five men in West Hartford under the leadership of W. E. Goodwin, and took its name from a New Haven member of that group. Its purpose was simple: to bend pipe. Its principal application was equipment to preheat with exhaust steam the water being fed into the steam boilers of the day. It was not long, however, before the automobile business offered a new market and Whitlock promptly offered a new product: car radiators. Large institutional buildings suggested a wide use of hot water service heaters, and newer markets were opened. The company even got the contract for the giant manganese bronze water turbines used in the Gatun dam at Panama. But these early adventures were financially fruitless in the days when inadequate cost accounting led to management upheavals in many a company.

The year 1925, marked a turning point for Whitlock. It had a new president, James Lester Goodwin, and a new industry was just getting way, an industry that was to find good use for Whitlock's bent pipe—the synthetic organic chemical industry. In the past quarter-century, manufacture of heat exchangers for the complicated processes in textiles, food preparation, plastics and virtually all other fields has become a major national industry. In that field Whitlock's has a commanding position. So proficient were they in manufacture, so advanced in research, that they were chosen to make the vast heat exchangers for the Oak Ridge atomic plant. Thus the Town's first heavy industry stepped into the atomic age.

From devising a water blower to pump the organ in old Park Church, to the giant machines producing man-made hurricanes in airplane test tunnels is the course of the Spencer Turbine Company, bridging two worlds with inventive daring. Ira Spencer's device in that dark church basement proved to be the first in a stream of fifty thousand blowers that have gone out from Connecticut to nearly every organ in the land, and many across the sea. But that was just the first of Spencer's inventions. By 1904, he had designed an electric motor to drive his turbine. A year later he reversed the principle of his machine, making one that instead of blowing air, sucked it. Out of this came stationary vacuum cleaners for schools, factories, other institutions, and even homes. In 1900, he married and moved to the house at 1043 Boulevard, where he perfected his third great invention, the turbo-centrifical air compressor. Thousands of pneumatic tube systems including the mammoth maze which whisks mail through the innards of Manhattan owe their existence to this basic idea. Ira Spencer died in 1928, in his new home on Mountain Road, but the factory continues today, with over 250 employees making and selling for the world's use a wide line of machines.

The next industry to send West Hartford's name around the world on its packing cases arrived in the Town in 1912. The Abbott Ball Company was founded by George Abbott, former superintendent of the New Departure plant in Bristol, who felt he could not work in another man's factory. Moving his family to Hartford, he and a helper installed a few pieces of machinery on a second floor loft at 15 Hicks Street and started a steel ball company. Soon the ten-

man staff outgrew the location, and Abbott bought the century-old Goodwin Brothers pottery works site in West Hartford. A new plant was built and in September of 1912, the eleven-man crew began the first production of steel balls in West Hartford, launching a period of forty-four years of continuing success as one of the world's largest producers of deep-hardened and tempered carbon steel ball bearings.

George Abbott was given to thinking a lot and talking little. When he observed that some of his cold-formed steel balls were being scrapped because of imperfections, his inventive mind turned to ways in which this by-product could be utilized. The result was his development of the octagonal tumblers used throughout industry to "cut down" or smooth up and burnish small manufactured metal items such as hardware and cutlery. He developed a line of "burnishing media", small, highly polished steel shapes resembling nothing so much as a handful of shining beads. An assortment of these shapes, designed to get into the crevices in the article being polished, such as the tines in a fork, is tumbled in a water-and-soap mixture in the burnish barrel. This Abbott development replaced tedious hours of hand burnishing in many industries. George Abbott left, besides his family, his Boy Scouts and Crippled Children, his associates in the Elmwood Community Church and the Masons, a factory going full blast in West Hartford with a hundred employees on the job. All over the world, automobiles, bicycles, carpet sweepers, elevators, farm machinery, typewriters, lawn mowers, and thousands of other tools and machines run smoothly on ball-bearings made here.

The word "chuck" was not in Mr. Webster's dictionary as a contrivance to hold work in a machine tool, because today's "fingers" of industry were not invented until 1830, two years after Mr. Webster's dictionary was first published. It remained for a Hebron boy to bring "chucks" to Mr. Webster's home town; that boy was Arthur Irving Jacobs, son of a farmer, mathematician, schoolteacher, inventor, and "pill doctor". Thus it was not strange that young Arthur should have had more than his share of Yankee ingenuity. He first worked in Worcester and made so many ingenious improvements on the machinery that his piecework pay got too high for the company's comfort. He next became an expert in wire drawing, then shifted to the American Optical Company in Southbridge and invented a book-binder, selling its patents to the Smythe Manufacturing Company of Hartford.

This connection brought him in 1888 to Hartford, and a life-long friendship with automobile manufacturer Albert A. Pope. For Pope's company, Jacobs made many free-lance mechanical improvements. One day, while in the laboratory, A. I. skinned his knuckles badly on a cumbersome drill chuck. Turning to an associate he vowed he would improve the old two-handed operation of the chuck. In a matter of a few days he had invented the toothed sleeve chuck and key, the foundation of the modern drill chuck industry. When Jacobs discovered that manufacturers didn't share his enthusiasm for this invention, he gathered together six experienced friends, put in his two thousand dollars savings, and launched his own company in a part of the Pope plant. On March 1, 1903, the first Jacobs' chuck left the proud hands of its inventor. Within six months they were in the black!

For seven years he ran the Jacobs show himself, and then brought in two young banker friends so he could concentrate on the production end of the business. These friends were banker friend Hubert M. Toppin and son-in-law Louis E. Stoner. As the company grew, a new plant on Park Street just east of the West Hartford line was built in 1916. Shortly after, the first World War, brought crowding demands. Perhaps it was the strain of these hectic years, but one morning in 1918, on his way to work, A. I. Jacobs died of a heart attack. Louis Stoner bought the plant from the Jacobs estate, and by concentration on volume, through aggressive advertising and low unit cost, built it up to over 200 employees. Even the lean years in the thirties saw the company in sound financial condition despite the fact volume had dwindled to only fifteen per cent of 1929 sales. In 1941, with World War II and its challenge to industry rumbling across the land, Jacobs Manufacturing Com-

pany moved to West Hartford. After a distinguished war career, the new plant on Jacobs Road was enlarged in 1947 by another eighty thousand feet to accommodate six hundred men and women in the production of A. I.'s new-fangled chucks for the markets of the world.

Jacobs weathered the stock crash. Holo-Krome was born during it. On the very day that the break in the market came, the eager work force of the new Holo-Krome Screw Corporation turned out its first completed screw. Vice-President William C. Stauble carried it in his hand to show it to President William A. Purtell, who had secured the financing for the infant company. From him he heard about Wall Street. The three enthusiastic young men who had staked their future on the new venture were to live the depression story with a vengeance. The first one hundred thousand dollars of their capital had gone into reconditioned equipment in the rented quarters on Pliny Street. With the crash, additional promised money dried up. It was almost a crushing blow to Bill Purtell, Bill Stauble, and Russell E. Gregory, who had left their jobs with a Hartford company in the dream of making and distributing "a better set-screw".

Cramped for capital, they could not develop the full line they had planned. Soon they discovered they did not even have enough money to meet their payroll for their twenty employees—including themselves! At that critical moment a former associate came to their rescue. He was West Hartford's Graham Anthony, and he persuaded his company, Veeder-Root, to take Holo-Krome under its wing. As the economic depression widened, Holo-Krome's problems became big worries for Veeder-Root, but the management never lost faith. The screw company moved in 1932 into part of the Veeder plant in Bristol where, if the rent wasn't paid exactly on the first, the struggling young business wasn't faced with immediate extinction.

In a company which for the past twenty years has shown pyramiding profits, it is difficult to imagine the days when the partners couldn't earn as much as thirty-five dollars a week in commissions, when President Purtell had to borrow capital in five hundred dollar lots to dole out five dollars to single employees and ten dollars to married workers until the payroll could be scraped together. Master Salesman Stauble somehow persuaded Detroit auto manufacturers to pay for their orders before they were even shipped. It was hand-to-mouth financing even after Bill Purtell had gotten patents on the cold-forged set screws in which the company had pioneered. But when the turn came in 1934 it came fast. When the firm was ready to move in 1936 to West Hartford, its staff had grown to forty. Nor did they rattle around long in their new building with its eleven thousand square feet of floor space. Employment in the Newington Road plant grew, additions were added, until there were to be three hundred and fifty men and women employed in this depression-born baby, and the situation so well under control that the company's president could go out and get himself elected the Town's first United States Senator, William A. Purtell.

During the intervening years the "Two Bills" company, as it became famed in the trade, developed a world-wide distribution, through three hundred outlets, and a name for leadership. During the World War II, its internal wrenching bolt for aircraft became an industry standard. Its line of screws, employed almost wherever machinery moves, grew to include screws so small ten thousand can be held in the cup of a hand, and so large that one weighs eighty pounds. When in 1946 the two Bills sold their Holo-Krome interest to Veeder-Root, and their baby became a wholly-owned but distinctly separate subsidiary, they had not forgotten the days when they temporarily had to dodge creditors by skipping out the Pliny Street backdoor into the nearby cemetery. Nor had they lost the vision which today finds the company on the verge of continued and extensive expansion.

Just a few years after West Hartford became a separate town, a frugal farm family in Ireland scraped together one hundred dollars and sent a promising young son to America. As the ship carrying him slowly tacked its way toward Boston, the wide-eyed seventeen-year-old Dan Murphy got in

a card game with some soldier boys. When the ship docked, he had one dollar of his patrimony left. Yet he was far wiser, because he had brains and integrity. Twenty years of application of them found him a highly successful pioneer of insurance in Milwaukee. Not forgetting the childhood lesson of ownership, in 1900 he bought out the Richmond Electric Wire Conduit Company in Milwaukee and put his eldest son, D. Hayes Murphy in charge. Twenty-nine years later, through a merger, a sale, a reorganization, and a number of other moves from Milwaukee to Pittsburgh to Hartford, the company ended up as the Wiremold Company of West Hartford, Connecticut, in 1929.

The Murphy conviction that a stake in the business was an essential ingredient of American enterprise led, in the good years of 1915 and 1916, to a pioneering step in profit-sharing. But a lean year followed, and the company discovered that it had paid out paper profits that had never been earned. From this near-disaster, the company gained the wisdom which is built into its present plan in which its three hundred and eighty employees share. In 1919, the Rigid Conduit Division was sold to the General Electric company; the company then moved to the old Franklin Lamp Works plant on Woodbine Street, Hartford. It had a solid program for development of its two remaining products: the popular non-metallic "loom", a flexible conduit for wiring; and the metallic "Wiremold" of which countless thousands of miles have been produced to provide the home-maker or office worker with "electrical outlets wherever she goes."

From 1919, the company's growth never stopped. On machines developed by its own engineers, Wiremold began to produce an increasingly superior "loom" along with a special type of air-duct and a defroster hose for the expanding automotive industry. To its ingenious Wiremolding, which permits economies in building interiors as well as easy remodeling and additions of electrical circuits, the heirs of Daniel Murphy added its equally clever Plugmold for putting electrical outlets wherever needed.

The automotive industry, which has proven an unqenchable market for many West Hartford industries, gave Phil Bush and three associates the urge to leave their jobs in 1907 to start a factory making automobile radiators. Their first little shop on Concord Street in Hartford was a hopeful place, but like most infant industries, it had its profit problems. That second year, Phil Bush found it necessary to take his problems to a well-to-do West Hartford friend, Colonel Richard Johnson Goodman. Mr. Goodman agreed to become president of the Bush Manufacturing Company in 1908 and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1938.

When, in 1947, the Bush Company came to its new one hundred thousand square foot plant in West Hartford, it was in a sense a homecoming. For the Goodman family, without which the little company might never have had a chance to prosper, was indelibly associated with the Town for the past five generations. Colonel Goodman served in World War I, but without relinquishing his office with the company. On his return, he brought in the group of talented young men who now operate it. Gradually he turned the business over to others and entered the investment field.

In the early '20s, he moved back to West Hartford to get out of the Hartford political arena which had been absorbing so much of his energies. But he hadn't been in the Town long before the special talents were put to the use of the Town government. He was soon persuaded to accept a position on the Town Board of Finance, and later became its chairman. But, as in the war years, he still kept a close eye on his company. In 1927, he saw it go into the air-conditioning and refrigeration business to supplement the heating products for which it had become famous, thanks to the efficiency of the assembly machine which Phil Bush had invented. As business grew, so did the variety of its products. The black days of 1941 found it ready to supply cooling equipment for planes, unit cooler for camps, and walk-in coolers for Army bases, ice-makers for Liberty ships. These war assignments kept more than 600 men busy.

Refrigeration isn't a new industry to West Hartford by many years. Back in 1886, the cutting, housing and delivery of ice from the West Hartford Reservoirs to the

city was a thriving business; and in 1879, Edwin Arnold purchased Seth Gilbert's gristmill, wagon and blacksmith shop on the "Noyes" river (Trout Brook), by the Center, and established an ice business delivering daily to Hartford and West Hartford. The Trout Brook Ice & Feed Company grew so large that it was necessary for it to lease the large Greenwoods Lake in New Hartford. On at least two occasions, in addition to supplying its local customers, the Trout Brook Ice Company shipped 50 car-loads of ice daily to New York City. In 1912, a 150-acre tract in the southwestern part of Town was purchased, a large ice pond and concrete ice house were built. A rail line was constructed from Farmington Avenue west of Mountain Road to the pond. Cars were purchased and the ice transported daily to West Hartford Center and other points. In 1927, the company was sold to the Southern New England Ice Company. Significant as this industrial chapter of the Town's history may be, one tradition in connection with the Trout Brook plant looms even larger.

Before the Norths and the Stanleys located in New Britain and laid the foundations for the mammoth manufacturing enterprises that have contributed to the development of that city, they endeavored to secure possession of the saw-mill and water privileges at this same site, but were prohibited because of the price set by the owners. How different the character of the Town might have been had these New Britain industries, blossomed instead along the Brook in the very Center of the Town!

When the Town's tax bills go out each May 1, the biggest bill of all is paid in the name of two men who never got closer to West Hartford than Whitney Street. Yet the great industry they founded in a single room today crowds a 20-acre plant on a 120-acre plot at the site of the famed Charter Oak Park in the southeast corner of the town. Both Francis Asbury Pratt and Amos Whitney devoted their lives to the making of accurate machinery. Through this mutual passion, they cemented a personal loyalty that built the Pratt & Whitney Company, the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company (which they sold to United Aircraft Corporation) and the Whitney Manufacturing Company. Chance brought them to Hartford. Francis Pratt was the son of a Lowell leather merchant. He was 25, and an accomplished machinist when he came to Colt's Patent Firearms Company in 1852. Amos Whitney's father, a relative of Eli Whitney of cotton gin and interchangeable parts fame, came to Hartford to work in Colt's too. When his son Amos joined him at a bench, he met Francis Pratt and a life-long friendship sprang up. When Pratt was offered a job at the Phoenix Iron Works, Whitney went with him.

They got $2 a day at the Phoenix and decided to supplement their meager earnings with work of their own at nights after a ten-hour day at the shop. In a small rented room, they made a "spooler" for the Willimantic Linen Co. The proceeds enabled Pratt to develop a milling machine which was the basis for their business. Fire demolished their little shop, but held them up only a month. They brought in another partner. Each put up $1,200 and capitalized for $3,600 a company which 80 years later had more than 5,000 war-time employees. In only seven years the company was chartered by the State with capital of $350,000 and soon afterwards, $500,000. But great personal sacrifices had to be made, long chances taken, great obstacles overcome—and even a depression licked before Pratt & Whitney became firmly established.

Pratt's visit to Germany in 1870 brought the company an immediate $350,000 order, and in later trips he sold more than three million dollars worth of foreign business while Whitney scoured up domestic accounts. The plant began to sprawl along the Park River on Capitol Avenue. The Civil War had given the company its start in arms manufacturing, and the invention of the typewriter and the bicycle gave great impetus to Pratt and Whitney's idea of making precision interchangable parts. This led to one of the world's largest businesses in machine tools and special machines.

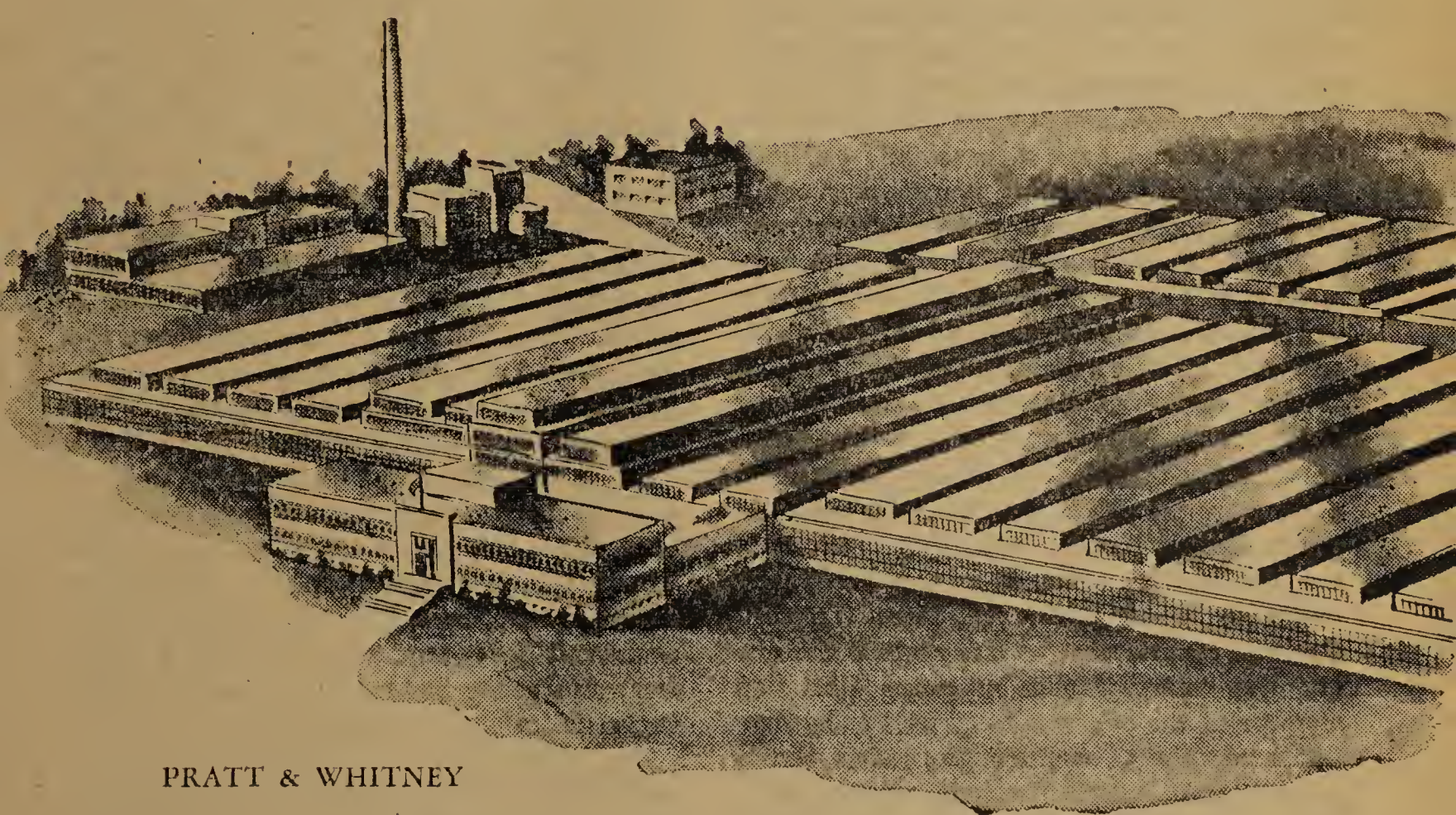
In 1901 they sold their expanding business to Niles-Bement-Pond. Whitney had succeeded his older friend as president in 1898, and a year after the sale Francis Pratt died suddenly while dressing for his breakfast. Amos Whitney died at Poland

Springs, Maine, in his eighty-eighth year.

Though these men had worked side by side, Amos Whitney left an estate of more than two million dollars in investments, while Francis Pratt had accumulated only $60,000 at his death. Whitney had no taste for public life, though a staunch Republican and an ardent Mason. Pratt, in contrast, was prominent in trade associations and held several city posts. Together they left an American monument in which West Hartford can share.

Leaders of industry, retailing and the growing West Hartford professions of medicine and law today merge their interest in the Town's development as members of the West Hartford Chamber of Commerce. Started in 1908 by Druggist Allen B. Judd, the Chamber had gone through three periods of decline and strong revival by 1954, when its 225 members were operating with a professional staff on a $17,000 budget. In its work for better planning, more detailed budgetary controls of the Town's finances and in seeking solutions for such problems as parking in the four major retail areas, the Chamber has been allied at times with the thousand members of the non-partisan West Hartford Taxpayers Association and the 350 members of the 31-year-old League of Women Voters.

The Pratt & Whitney story and the tales that make up the pasts of modern West Hartford industries stem from the age when Yankee ingenuity was building ever new products and factories. Tomorrow's story of industry has not unfolded. Future writers will trace the careers of men like Charles Kaman, who worked out his ideas for a new type helicopter in his West Hartford basement. Time will ferret out the Ira Spencers in the churches of the Town, the young Purtells and Whitneys in its schools. There are Abbotts among the 8,000 men and women who work in West Hartford's 30 factories, great and small. For these men who have the vision to sieze new industrial opportunity, there will always be room in West Hartford, and, with sound leadership, their factories.



PRATT & WHITNEY

XIV. THE GOOD OLD DAYS

THE Puritan fathers had stern Calvinistic feelings about gay amusements, so the first half century of West Hartford social life was mighty lean of excitement. The farmer worked from sun-up to sunset, then spent the evenings carving furniture or farm equipment. Church, and perhaps the inn occasionally, were the two sources of his entertainment, although by law he was not allowed to spend more than a half an hour drinking at a "victualing house", nor could he drink more than a prescribed amount. Even at the inn, whether it was John Seymour's on the Farmington Road, or Wadsworth's on the Simsbury Road, or Goodman's on North Main, no dicing or card-playing, or shuffle-board was allowed. Nor could a man order a Barbados rum.

As the West Division developed, there were penalties for theatrical performances. Exhibitions of tumbling, rope dancing, and similar forms of commercial entertainment were forbidden. The *Hartford Courant* reports that as late as 1825 the circus was "disapproved by every Christian member of the community as well as by hundreds of others, whether professing Christians or not, whether republicans or not." Even in 1840, the clergy preached against the circus which was forbidden by law.

In spite of this ban, in "the good old days", there were plenty of "Menageries", enthusiastically welcomed "Caravans of Wild Animals", which the town fathers did not regard as "low and vulgar." Advertisements called them "educational wonders of nature". The first such menagerie "played Hartford" in 1821, with "A Bison taken 1,500 miles above the Missouri, and weighing 1,800 pounds" and "A Calf with six legs, one-year-old. These limbs are uncommonly alive". Eleven years later another caravan came to Town with the "Royal Tiger of Asia, a full grown male zebra of Ethiopia, a Siam elephant and a unicorn!" This animal was a rhinoceros, "considered by theological commentators as the unicorn of holy writ" shilled the barker. A lion-tamer act of about the same period piously advertised as "an exemplification of the Biblical injunction—"the Brute shall be subject to the Will of Man".

A "man monkey" visited town in 1834, but the crowning menagerie event of that year was when two elephants were leaving Town. They spotted a heap of picked apples in an orchard, bulled their way through the snake-rail fence and could not be dragged away until they had appeased their "exceedingly delicate little stomachs".

Magic shows were billed as "rational amusements." Ventriloquism was offered to the public as an "opportunity to distinguish illusion from reality," and freaks were exhibited as "valuable to those who would better appreciate God's creation of Man."

When P. T. Barnum introduced

George Washington's nurse to Hartford's forebears back in 1833, she was alleged to be 161 years old. But the righteous men of God hurried Phineas out of the State, and it was not until he had swept the South with his showmanship that he returned to the North. Success brought him begrudging respect.

The big holidays of yesteryear were Training Day, Election Day, the Glorious Fourth, Thanksgiving, and (later) Christmas. John Adams has written that Training Day was among the dominant social factors that developed the New England character. Every man from 16 to 60 was once required to belong to the militia, to attend monthly muster days, and to be prepared to "repel armed invasion". This continued until as late as 1846. Muster Day was a great holiday for the hard-working farmer and his family. Drill was a bit irregular, often ludicrous, with a farmer giving commands like "Gee" and "Haw" for left or right face. And when he wanted to halt his ragged column he was as apt to cry "Whoa" as "Halt".

The day began with a roll of the drum at eight o'clock. Often three generations of one family appeared in the ranks. The clerk called roll. Arms were inspected. Some carried old flint-lock muskets. More had pikes and swords. Hours passed in instruction and drill. Then there would be a review. The occasion not only kept alive the military spirit and generated patriotism, it was highly regarded as a social function. One of the few occasions when the men could get together and chat about crops, and when the young fellows could see their girls, There was feasting and merriment in homes and taverns. It worried some of the more sober old divines, and Parson Wadsworth wrote in his diary in 1737, "Publick diversions often occasion much sin. I wish it may not be ye case this day".

A West Division company of the militia was organized in 1714, a year after the church, and continued for 132 years. Yearly the whole family came in to Goodman Green with a Training Day picnic lunch of slices of spare-ribs with homemade pickles on "riz" biscuits; and gingerbread, cider, watermelons, and oysters. The big thing was the Training Cake and each housewife made hers from much the same recipe:

> "4 eggs, 6 gills of milk, 4 pounds of flour, 12 oz. butter, 1 pound sugar, and a little emptins".

There was great rivalry, as there would be later in the year over 'Lection Cake, as to whose was best. The afternoon drill over there would be a ball with "reel o'Four", "money musk," and "stony point."

Dr. Gurdon W. Russell in his book "Up Neck—in 1825" tells of driving in to the West Hartford Training Day in his ox cart. The sham battle he reported was a "terrific sight", yet he described the homeward journey as being almost as interesting. "Hilarious crowds filled the roads, shouting and driving their horses at full speed."

On Election Day, schools and stores would be closed. There would be parades, quoit pitching contests, and games at wicket ball. The 'Lection Cake was a rusk, rich with fruit and wine, and served to all callers.

But the greatest of all holidays was the Fourth of July, which was observed for generations in a way "calculated to keep alive and nourish the principles of liberty". Church bells and cannon salutes ushered the day. At ten, the people would congregate on the Green and there were enthralled with a session of true spread-eagle oratory, punctuated by firecrackers, and the reading of the Declaration of Independence by one of the Town's leading citizens. And then at the end, a banquet in which toasts were drunk to everything and everybody from "The Spirit of '76", and "The True American System" on to "The Cause of the Greeks" and "The Patriots of the South American Republics".

As night fell there was a fireworks display. As early as 1823, the West Hartford Baptists condemned fireworks as the "usual noisy, heathenish rites". Boys threw crackers not only at horses, but also at each other, and in open house windows.

The Centennial of Washington's birthday held in 1832, and three years later Hartford's own bi-centennial, were fabulous affairs. The visit of Lafayette in 1824, brought the farmers of West Hartford in to Hartford City to join the 14,000 who waited outside Daniel Wadsworth's mansion to cheer the

great man. Lafayette arrived late for the breakfast that had been arranged for him. But he stayed on to review the troops, and hold a reception. A committee of gentlemen presented him with the sash he had worn at the Battle of Brandywine. And then "it became necessary for him to hurry to depart". He left "mid salutes of cannon and shouts of thousands of gratified and grateful spectators". The roads to West Hartford were dusty that day!

Thanksgiving was the next annual holiday and fittingly observed. Christmas, however, was regarded with considerable suspicion by the Congregational fathers, whose distrust of Anglicanism kept them from recognizing Christmas as a special Holy Day. Only the Episcopal bell sounded in Town on Christmas morning. Harriet Beecher, daughter of a Congregational minister, confessed later in life that she used to sneak over to the Episcopal Church on Christmas because of the beautiful services.

Of all the holidays, William Hall, the Town's beloved historian, felt that Thanksgiving best exemplified the spirit of West Hartford. He looked upon it as sort of an Old Home Day. In his account of life in the Town before the twentieth century turned, he spoke of Thanksgiving as the day on which "sons and daughters, grandchildren, uncles, aunts and cousins were accustomed to come from homes far and near, back to their childhood homes, or to the homes of friends and relatives". This was all part of the informal, social life of West Hartford during the nineteenth century, when nearly every family was related to many others in the community. "Families living near each other in different section . . . were accustomed to frequent one another's homes in a very free and easy way, at morning, noon, or night, to inquire as to one another's welfare, to communicate the latest news, or to bring choice flowers or vegetables from the garden or dainties or more substantial food from the pantry," Mr. Hall used to relate. It was not possible, of course, to make social plans, organize a meeting, or even call a doctor without saddling a horse and riding across the country-side. The first of West Hartford's thirty-six thousand telephones in 1954 was not installed until 1879 for "H. J. Johnson, Farmington Avenue." In 1888 there were only eight phones in Town.

It was the custom in those less sophisticated days that when one family would have something special, some luxury or some new recipe, they would send a portion to their neighbor. It would generally be called "a taste of our dinner", a compliment appreciated and always returned on the earliest possible occasion. House entertaining was simple. No advance preparation for company needed be made. Corn huskings, apple-parings, these were practical ways of entertaining your guests. On a grander scale were the house-raisings, husking bees and timber-felling contests.

A goodly part of the social life of early days of the Town consisted in helping the next fellow with his barn raising, his sheep-shearing, his corn-husking. If the first foundation of New England was religion, the second was certainly neighborliness. In late summer and early fall, basket picnics were high spots for the whole family. Favorite gathering places were Whitman's Falls, Selden Hill, Burr's Grove, Bartlett's Tower on Talcott Mountain, or Shuttle Meadow Lake near New Britain. Seldom were the journeys long. Jonathan Butler, who lived on North Main Street, was considered mighty daring when he had a pleasure wagon built in 1825 and took his daughter on a visit to Ohio. Such a journey, over crude roads and over-grown trails, became a family saga, passed down from generation to generation.

All-day excursions were a popular form of entertainment from the Town's beginnings. Not many made the trip the Butlers made, but it was the custom to sail occasionally down to Saybrook, on the Connecticut River, aboard the Oliver Ellsworth. Or, after the Farmington Valley Canal was completed in 1828, to ride under the canvas awning of the canal boat. It was a lark to go down to New Haven and back for a dollar from as far north as Simsbury. You left aboard the "DeWitt Clinton" Friday morning, and returned Saturday night, passing through 22 locks each way! Later came the fun of trolley rides, railroad trips, and the bicycle derbies.

In the winter it would be sleigh rides. In 1835, the Middletown paper reported a gi-

ant sleigh from Hartford with 54 in the one vehicle. Some mistook it for the famed Cape Cod Sea Serpent, making for New York overland. The gentlemen in the party belonged to "that portion of Hartford democracy irreverently termed 'twaddlers'". But they behaved themselves well, and after refreshments at the inn, turned their giant sled north and sped home across the white landscape.

As the Town grew, it began to take a part in the more "cultured" social affairs, such as the Lyceum and the old-time Elocution Program. The program became a popular winter's night entertainment, consisting of as many as thirty oratorical or poetry numbers. There would be noble declamations, and risible chacterization. Usually the program took contest form, lasting up to two hours. The lyceums like the Goodrich Association or the Ciceronian Lyceum of Hartford began to gain popularity in the early 1830's. The weekly discussion groups considered such questions as "Did the public conduct of Caeser merit the death he suffered?" and "Are the pleasures of Hope greater than those of Memory?" A little later came the organization of mechanics, and the libraries for the working man. There were the Temperance Societies, the Abolitionists, and the Connecticut Peace Society, "one of the noblest societies ever formed on earth" reported the *Courant* in 1820, approving heartily a local oration "portraying the horrors of war and teaching the benevolence of peace and philanthropy".

By 1830, Hartford had its own private circulating library. For eighty-seven cents a quarter, a subscriber could take out three books a week. West Hartford farmers, coming home from market, could read the latest non - fiction as their lightened wagons jounced along the rutted highway. They went to Agricultural Fairs and Cattle Shows where the men took part in plowing matches, and their wives competed in fruit, vegetable and floral exhibits.

The church became more and more a gathering point of social activities, once the sternest grimness left the pulpit. Sunday schools were begun in 1816 to help strengthen the established church against the time, two years later, when State support was to be withdrawn. And ladies' societies became the thing. They made a great do of holding Fairs and Strawberry Festivals to raise money. As far back as 1831, are accounts of a Ladies' Aid Society in one of the Hartford churches holding a fair and raising $400.00 which they sent to promote education in the Mississippi valley. West Hartford's first rank in intellectual enlightment was the lecture. A hundred years ago, Emerson, Horace Greeley, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Quincey Adams all lectured in Hartford the same winter.

By 1850, there was a 30 lecture season. Histories tell how local grandsires used to enjoy the stereoscope; and how panoramas and dioramas like "Napoleon's Funeral", or "The Beauties of the Alps" drew huge crowds from the whole metropolitan area.

As early as 1858, Trinity College boys played the Town boys in a game of "football". There were baseball and cricket teams in Town by 1860. This same year a number of local boat clubs composing the Hartford Navy challenged the Springfield Navy to a three mile boat race on the Connecticut. A year before, there was a "skating fever" and everyone carried skates out to the ponds and pools.

In 1851, Mr. Barnum returned to Hartford. This time he brought General Tom Thumb and the Ceylon Elephant, together with many other wonders. He packed 'em in to the tune of 15,000. But the newspapers still claimed they preferred the hippodrome to the circus as the latter had clowns who sometimes "indulged in obscene jokes." Outdoor band concerts and traveling minstrels, and itinerant daguerreotypists, helped make life seem gay like it had never been in the days of the Revolutionary patriots. But the storm clouds rising from the South were bringing about the change of an era.

By the time the Civil War ended, "progress" came back on the job and the Town

speeded its growth to 1,533 in 1870. Not only did it get bigger but it took on a new feeling and form. Times were getting "modern".

For those who found their enjoyment in nature, rather than in menageries or meetings, the hills along the Town's western border offered solace and contentment. Usually a haven of quiet, the mountain slope on one tragic occasion held the threat of near-disaster for the farmers who lived below it.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of January 2, 1867, Hartford's pumps that had long taken river water from a well, 140 feet from the Connecticut River, "were put to sleep" and Reservoir No. 1 of the new Metropolitan District was opened. Scoffers had enjoyed a field day when it was announced that little old Trout Brook would be dammed up to supply not only West Hartford, but even Hartford itself with water. One even wrote a poem to the Hartford paper that sang:

I am Trout Brook! But where you look
You look for a river in vain,
For there is no water within a mile and a quarter
Unless it happens to rain!

I am only fed by a water-shed
And my very name is a sham.
So that, to my scandal, both sides make a handle
Of the devil's device and cry—Dam!

But even the scoffers were impressed when that very fall, the millions of gallons of water trapped by the great earthen dam, broke through and came crashing through the Town, almost taking the Town with it. On September 6, 1867, rain poured in torrents for four solid hours. As the water poured into No. 1 Reservoir, alarmed farmers noticed that the seepage under the new dam was flowing harder. Before midnight, flood-gates were hastily opened to relieve the pressure of thirty-two acres of water on the fifty-three foot dam that was eight hundred feet long. But the leaks grew.

At ten the following morning, with the "rumble of an earthquake", the base of the dam gave way. The top crumbled in with a 125-foot breach. A gigantic wall of water crushed down the hillside and across the valleys "like the mighty waves of a storm-swept ocean." Great elms and maples, centuries old, disappeared. Stanley's dam and saw mill, near where Albany Place is today, was flicked off the landscape. George Brace's out-buildings were carried away. Edwin Belden's farm was buried under a foot of gravel, stone and sand. Fences vanished. Corn fields were uprooted and blanketed in ruin. Five cows grazing peacefully on John Griswold's farm were swirled miles down the course of Trout Brook and deposited on high ground, a lifetime of swimming behind them.

It was as if the little brook had been driven to fury by the waggish insults about her ability to supply water. With a great wave she snapped off the bridge at Mountain Road, rushed on to carry away the spans at Fern Street and at North Main. The new $8,000.00 bridge at the Center was wrenched askew and had to be rebuilt. Every lowland along the brook became a wide lake, in a few disastrous minutes. For several days "you might have run steamboats from West Hartford to the sea," one on-the-scene reporter wrote. Luckily, no one was drowned.

The great flood was brief but convincing. Streams, their bridges gone, halted the people who flocked out from Hartford the next day to survey the scene. But the damage was quickly repaired. Hartford, which had barely finished spending $73,000 for the dam at Reservoir No. 1 appropriated more money to build a safe dam to replace the earth fill. The new dam was rip-rapped with rocks and gravel, the flood had scoured the old damsite clean down to bed-rock.

The Town was paid for its bridges, and the farmers got $17,000 in reparations. The critics who had argued that the reservoirs in West Hartford could not provide enough water, were silenced. The hard feelings that were created when some West Hartford farmers thought Hartford ought to provide them free water because the great pipes were buried under Farmington Avenue, were forgotten. The compromise was to supply West Hartford from the same source at the same price.

Today 36 million gallons run under the Town's main east-west arteries each day, the soft, pure drinking water which flows into homes in the metropolitan area. Reservoir No. 1, held safely behind the dam carefully constructed nearly 80 years ago, is still the beauty spot of older days. But the chain of six reservoirs that enhance the beauty of the

hills bordering the Town, is now added to by water piped many miles from Nepaug in the hills of Northwestern Connecticut. The system has been a favorite picnic, hiking, driving and bridle area from the beginning. In the old days the trolley line to Unionville passed by, and many were the picnickers who got off with baskets, their ukeleles and mandolins. James Shephard, writing in the old *Connecticut Magazine* of January, 1896, reports it as "one of the most desirable outing spots in the State".

He called particular attention to Reservoir No. 3 "nestled under Cathedral Rock, and the great boulder near Reservoir No. 2 that points a long index finger from the midst of a 'beautiful little forest alcove'. All mountains drives are grand, one leading west of Reservoir No. 3 that is especially fine", he pointed out. But it is the lakes themselves, "five of the most beautiful mountain lakes that were ever clustered together", and surrounded by nineteen miles of public drives that evoked the greatest poetic flights by the mauve decade author. "Most men like water—to look at," he writes.

There were a few seats and tables sixty years ago. And there was something else —a fountain for horses. The route to the top was a real test of stamina. Some of the way, its "tortuous track is barely wide enough to let a wagon pass between the projecting rocks on either side". To would-be picnickers, Shephard uttered a timely word of warning. "We are always on the look-out for poison, so when searching for floral treasure here, we keep our eyes on the sumac as the Boston police are said to keep their eyes on John L. Sullivan, taking care we do not touch the sumac or even come very near it."

West Hartford's water difficulties were not always too much; at times there was too little. On December 7, 1900 the reservoirs were empty, except for an eight day supply in Reservoir No. 1, according to Phelps Arms in the *Connecticut Magazine*. Each person in Town was using 935 pints a day, which Mr. Arms thought "extravagant to the point of fool-hardiness." But by cutting down sharply, the citizens averted the disaster of a water shut-off.

In plenty or in drought, the reservoir area has always been the backdrop of West Hartford's outdoor life. The early farmers had their woodlots on the montainside and often took their families there for outings. From 1810 on, they were, for years, welcome at the fabulous summer home of Hartford's wealthy and benevolent Daniel Wadsworth. Just over the line into Avon, on the crest of Talcott mountain, he built a fifty-five foot, six-sided wooden tower, whose eight stairways spiralled up to a platform 960 feet above the sea. Wadsworth called it Monte Video, and to it came not only the local townspeople, but often the greats of politics and literature.

The first Monte Video blew down in 1840, was replaced by a second, ten feet higher. On Wadsworth's death it changed hands, then burned up in 1864. A bit farther north, the third tower was erected, and came finally into the ownership of millionaire printing press manfacturer Robert Hoe. That home is gone, too, but as this century got under-way, along the same bluff the Heublein Tower reared up over the whole landscape. The mountain is still a favorite haunt for Scouts and other hikers along the Metacomet section of the well-blazed Blue Trail, and the walks around Reservoir No. 6 are still popular from early spring until late in the fall.

Today there are other parks in the Town, though two of them are not owned by the Town at all. The Congregational Church holds title to Goodman Green, and the city of Hartford owns Elizabeth Park, most of whose land lies within the bounds of West Hartford. Charles Pond bought a large farm on Prospect Hill. From the high house site, the hill sloped west to a swampy pasture. His son, Charles, born in 1837, succeeded to the farm on the death of his father. Here he built fancy new stables where he bred and raised the famous "trotting demon" Clingstone, and other horses of fame.

When Pond, Jr. died, he left the farm to the City of Hartford as a park in memory of his wife Elizabeth, and set up a $100,000 trust to maintain it. This outraged his brother Anson Phelps Pond, the well-known New York dramatic writer, whose bequest of a gold watch and diamond ring was ungratefully received. Anson sued, claiming that Charles had become a liquor and dope addict,

that his mind was impaired and his natural affections perverted. There was a long court fight, but the city of Hartford won both the park and the trust fund.

In more than half a century, the City has added to the Elizabeth Park land, more than 80 acres of it in West Hartford, and generously shared the use of Mr. Pond's gift with all who care to admire the ponds, playcourts, greenhouse, arbors, and the 500 varieties of roses which, blooming in the spring, attract visitors from all over the nation to see this floral tribute to Elizabeth Pond from her husband, first president of the Hartford Trust Co., treasurer of the State of Connecticut and the Hartford & New Haven Railroad and State Senator.

A tongue-in-cheek account claims that West Hartford's first big development came when the people of Hartford drifted out to play golf in its pastures, and stayed to live around its clubs. On a warm summer day in 1895, two young Hartford Yale alumni went for a walk in the western section of the City. They commented to each other that Springfield had a golf course, so did New Haven, and it seemed to these young tennis enthusiasts, Emerson Taylor and Billy St. John, that Hartford should get in the parade.

Neither of them knew a thing about golf, but they chanced into a meeting with the Scottish treasurer of Pratt & Whitney, J. Carolus Sterling. The following June, the club was organized, and ten days later, the first play started on seven holes laid out on the eastern part of Elizabeth Park and some adjoining land which had been leased for a nominal sum. The clubhouse was a converted barn on Kenyon Street.

Within a few years, the growing club needed a much larger tract, and the "Huntington Property" was purchased. Later more land north of Albany Avenue was added. Today, its 216 acres make the Hartford Golf Club one of the largest land-owners in West Hartford. Much of this acreage was originally part of the tract that had been set aside between Hartford and the West Division in 1674 "to be a common forever for the use of all the people". Although the common was used up for farms, the creation of the golf club, Elizabeth Park, and Charter Oak Park in this same belt along the eastern boundary of the Town, helped fulfill their purpose.

Rockledge and Wampanoag Country Clubs had their beginnings in the early twenties. When Rockledge was bought by Wilton W. "Mike" Sherman in 1913, he had nothing more in mind than a farm. While at Yale, he had read of "a gentleman's estate" for sale in West Hartford. When he saw the 120 acres, the two farm buildings with their herd of pure Guernseys and four handsome horses, he decided then and there he would buy it.

But when he got to the real estate office he was told a more nimble purchaser had beaten him to it. Mike bought out the uncertain buyer. A few years later a group of sportsmen looked over Mike's farm as a possible golf course. Their architect turned it down because of its flat rolling hills, and so this group went out and bought the Miller farm in Bloomfield, just over the West Hartford line. This is now the Tumble Brook Club. The survey by the golfing architect planted an idea in Mike Sherman's mind. He called together a group of neighbors and proposed turning his farm into a golf course. The idea was popular and a new name was chosen—The Webster Hill Country Club. The plowing of the fairways began, and as soon as his associates began to understand the cost of conversion, they gave up. Sherman was left to go it alone.

He came up with a 14-hole course called Rockledge, which opened in 1924, with Willie Whalen, the pro. The first clubhouse was on the east side of South Main in the old Woolley estate, and the first tee was almost on the street. In 1927 it was expanded to 18 holes. Six years later, the course was revamped and a new clubhouse built, but rode out the depression as a night club. Promoter Mike Sherman held tournaments at Rockledge, at which the greatest names in golfing appeared—Joe Turnesa, Walter Hagen, Paul Runyan, Gene Sarazen, "Babe" Didricksen, and many others. Perhaps the greatest tournament ever played in West Hartford was when the 1932 New England Open ended in a tie between Paul Runyan and Willie MacFarland. The former National Open Champion won the play-off. In 1946, Tommy Armour, "The Silver Scot," became the Rockledge pro after a lot of persuasion. "Connecticut is the bottom of the world as far as golf

is concerned", Armour is reported as saying to his prospective boss. Armour also had a stock phrase for a bad day's golf. "I played like a Connecticut pro." But he came!

Older than Rockledge, younger than Hartford Golf Club, is the Wampanoag Country Club, laid out on the storied site of a bloody Indian battlefield where arrowheads have been plowed up. In 1923, seven local sportsmen bought the old Cadwell farm. The famed golf course architect Ronald Ross laid out such an excellent course that memberships climbed to almost $2,000. The club became more popular yearly, and soon grandiose plans were being broached. The new club house was to be a three-story Italian style palace with a red tile roof on one of the highest elevations in West Hartford. It was to have outdoor dining rooms, roof gardens, lakes for swimming and ice-skating, plus facilities for all-around winter and summer sports, gymnasium, handball courts, and indoor swimming pool. The depression killed this dream but there are new plans for a large modern clubhouse—just as the Hartford golf clubhouse is to be rebuilt across Albany Avenue from its site in 1954.

The fourth West Hartford golf course, now known as Buena Vista, has not had the smooth sailing enjoyed by its predecessors. Originally called the West Hartford Country Club, it was abandoned in 1935 when its members joined the Sequin Golf Club in Newington. The course continued until World War II broke out, then lay fallow until the Town took it over as a public course.

Not every one played golf, and there were always other community recreations for the people of West Hartford. During the decade following 1885, the Town's fortunes followed the West Hartford Fife and Drum Band as it played in nearly every community in the State. It was a self-starting "outfit of boys" from the "upstairs school" (to distinguish the high from the grammar school). They pooled their musical talents, bought white flannel shirts and blue trousers, and were on their way.

As the years passed, their skill and their popularity increased. They were in such demand that they would hire out to the Democrats in the afternoon and to the Republicans at night. But as the boys grew out of their teens and into marriage and the serious farm life of the day, the band waned and died before the new century was ushered in. It has taken its place in history beside the Revolutionary militia that drummed out the early citizens of the Town, the military bands which played for the Civil War volunteers, the weekly singing societies that church choirmaster, Thomas Brace, used to hold. It set the precedent for the controversial Noah Webster Fife & Drum Corps, and the many church, lodge, Scout, and school bands which came apace as the Town grew.

So the scenes change. A trip to Ohio is no great shakes today. The stereoscope has yielded to 3-D movies, and the plowing contests are discovered only in the hills. The "good old days" are gone. Or are they? The cotton candy and the ferris wheel belong to an earlier and less sophisticated day. Or do they? The Fourth may have become "safe and sane" and dull, but West Hartford still has a genial Labor Day Fair that brings its sprawling population together in a spree of games and sport and good fellowship. "The good old days" do not die, they just don their different trappings.

XV. LIVES OF CREATION

ROSE TERRY was a sickly little girl, and when her friends were having a gay old time in the apple orchards and barns of her father's farm on Albany Turnpike just beyond the Steele's Road, Rose would wander off to be with nature. She was a remarkable young lady. More than a century ago, at the age of three she could read, and in no time at all her poems were amazing her proud parents, well-to-do West Hartford farm folk.

Her father, Henry Wadsworth Terry, was a banker's son; her mother, the daughter of a wealthy shipbuilder. When Rose's father was elected to Congress, his little daughter, with her flashing beauty, dark deep eyes, and "aristocratic forehead" helped endear him to his constituents.

When she was sixteen, Rose Terry was a lithesome beauty, a graduate of the Hartford Seminary. She had written a collection of ballads, short poems and simple sketches and was adding to them later as she taught school in Massachusetts, and, for a time, in Burlington, New Jersey. When her sister died and Rose returned to Connecticut to raise her young nephews and nieces, she carried on her quiet art of perfection. As the children grew old enough to fend more for themselves, Rose Terry began to submit her poems and sketches to the periodicals of the day. After one caught the fancy of Charles A. Dana, who printed the first of her pieces in the *New York Tribune*, *Harpers* and the *Atlantic* followed suit. Critics promptly showered praise for the sensitive, deeply religious feeling shown in the wide variety of her subject matter and metrical form. The flowers, the seasons, the land, the days in rural West Hartford all came to life under her pen. In the "Trailing Arbutus" she wrote that:

Were not mortal sorrow
An immortal shade,
Then would I tomorrow
Such a flower be made
And live in the dear woods
Where my lost childhood played.

For all her tenderness to her sister's family, and her loyalty to the Presbyterian Church, Rose Terry came to be called one of the first regional realists. Her conventional style was not hide-bound by stiffness, nor was she a slave to nineteenth century social conventions. The memories of the pleasant hours on her long walks over the meadows where hundreds of houses stand today, she recaptured in short stanzas like this from "Hester"—

Sunset in the mountains hoary
Deepens into night;
Day hath lost its crown of glory
Life hath lost its light.

In 1873, at the height of her recognition as an original poet and translator of French and Hebrew, and before she tried her hand at much less successful novels, Rose Terry married Rollin Hillyer Cooke, an ironmonger of Winsted. She moved to what is today called the Rose Terry Cooke Mansion in Winsted, and fourteen years later she went to Pittsfield. There she died of influenza in 1892. Rose Terry Cooke left behind an impressive collection of manuscripts, tribute to her facile hand and mind. Her work did not live into immortality, yet

it had achieved a greatness that came from its vivid portrayal of the plain life for which New England was noted. Village life in the struggling little West Division had helped inspire a truly poetical mind. "Happy Dodd" and "The Sphinx's Children" were among her poems highly regarded by the critics, and John Greenleaf Whittier once wrote that her dialect stories of New England had no equal. Many of them appeared under pseudonyms in local, Boston and New York papers. They were shown briefly, and buried in the files.

During the same years, the eyes of the literary world were focused on Hartford as the home of an unforgotten writer, Samuel Clemens. Visitors were said to come to the United States to see just two things: Niagara Falls and Mark Twain's home on Farmington Avenue. Mark Twain, in a cloud of "seegar" smoke, strode through West Hartford many times with his friend of forty years, Joe Twitchell. Engaged in peppery conversation, ignoring autograph seekers—although Mark carried a supply of autographs in his pocket which he generally sold upon request—the two would be on their way to their favorite rendezvous, Monte Video, atop Talcott mountain just over the West Hartford border.

Joseph Twitchell rowed on the Yale crew, but left college to become a chaplain in General "Dan" Sickles corps during the "War of the Rebellion". When he met Mark Twain, Twitchell was the pastor of the fashionable Asylum Hill Congregational Church, which his author friend derisively called the "Church of the Holy Speculator". West Hartford got mention in Mark Twain's autobiography because the deacons of the "Holy Speculator" wanted to fire their pastor for voting for Democrat Grover Cleveland when he won the Presidency in 1884. In those days there was no secret ballot, and anybody could see how a man voted. When Twitchell and Twain "consummated our hellish design" in voting for Cleveland, to quote from Mark's autobiography, "straightway this crime was known to the whole community." From that time on, Twitchell's life was a "good deal of a burden to him." Mark Twain's income happily came from outside Hartford; Francis Goodwin, "the third traitor", publicly suffered no harm. "His father was worth seven million dollars, and was old," says Mark. But less fortunate Pastor Joe had a large, young family to support, and his salary was not growing as fast as his children's appetites.

Came the day of the annual meeting of the congregation, when the pews were sold for the following year. The meeting no sooner opened than one portly parishioner pulled himself to his feet and moved that the connection between Twitchell and the church be severed. He was cheered heartily. Undoubtedly the errant pastor would have been dumped had not one of the cooler heads appealed to the finer sensibilities of his fellow members.

"When he assumed the pastorate," said the speaker, "this region was an outlying district, thinly inhabited. Its real estate was worth next to nothing. Mr. Twitchell's personality was a magnet which immediately began to draw population in this direction. It has continued to draw it from that day to this. Reflect before you vote this Resolution. The Church in West Hartford is waiting upon this vote with deep solicitude. That congregation's real estate stands at a very low figure. What they are anxious to have now above everything else under God, is a price-raiser. Dismiss Mr. Twitchell tonight, and they will hire him tomorrow. Prices there will go up; prices here will go down. That is all. I move the vote." This telling argument won a decision to keep Joseph Twitchell.

But Mark Twain took a dim view of West Hartford's real estate prospects. That Joe Twichell, "or any other expert, could have raised the prices in West Hartford, is, to my mind, exceedingly doubtful," the irascible author volunteered.

The literary tradition of West Hartford handed down from Noah Webster continues along the Town's tree-lined asphalt street. Among many present day authors and artists, typical is George Malcolm-Smith. An insurance executive, he has hit the best seller list several times with his whimsey. "Are You With It?", his gay yarn about an actuary who gets misplaced in a circus, was translated into a long-run Broadway musical comedy and a Hollywood epic.

Trinity Professor Robert Black re-

cently published a scholarly study of "The Railroads of the Confederacy". Former Town Tax Collector, Arthur R. Thompson, has his name on four volumes. The Town has had more than its share of kitchen poets and insurance company free-lancers whose short-lived fame is outshone by the personal satisfaction of a life enriched by pen, brush and chisel. On a more enduring scale have been well-known writers like Alfred Hitchcock, of *American Boy* magazine fame, and Jane Quigg, Whitman school teacher, whose children's stories rank high on American library lists. Long a resident of West Hartford, Miss Martha Spencer, was the prime mover in organizing the Poetry Club of Hartford after she moved there. She edits the Poets' Corner in the *Hartford Times.*

While there have been comparatively few well-known West Hartford writers in two centuries and a half, the Town has always been well represented by readers. Back in 1753, Noah Webster's father and several others started a thriving Book Society, and years later Noah, Jr., sent up from his home in New Haven a generous assortment of books to the West Hartford Congregational Church. With this to start, the church organized under Miss Elizabeth S. Elmer a free library association that prospered for thirty years. Its "stacks" in the church vestry built up to over a thousand volumes, almost a book for each citizen of the Town, a hundred years ago.

With the help of donation of cash and additional books from James Talcott, the Town took over the library in 1897. Twenty years later the Daughters of the American Revolution dedicated their Webster Memorial Library Building (now leased by the Town to the YMCA). The continued growth of the Town and the library forced the decision for new quarters, and in 1938 the new building on South Main Street was opened. At the Centennial year its 95,000 books, 500 record albums and extensive magazine file of 300 publications serves a well-read town in which one in three uses the library and takes an average of twenty-five books out each year.

The tidings of the world came, over the years, to the West Division and later the Town through the daily papers in Hartford —once thirteen of them. The neighborhood news was long exchanged in taverns, at church socials and Town meetings and finally found print in November, 1878 in *The Comet,* which blazed a brief monthly trail across the events of the Town. Two months later Civil Engineer L. A. McNeil launched *The Elmwood Press,* a short-lived amateur journal full of briefs like "Cornelius Vanderbilt has repurchased his old residence on Farmington Avenue," and ". . . Why does not the Village Improvement Society patronize home industry?"

James C. Late, one of the publishers of the *Farmington Valley Herald and Journal,* lived just west of Mountain Road on Farmington Avenue and it was convenient for him to drum up circulation in West Hartford in the 1890's. But it was forty years before the Town got a weekly of its own, the *West Hartford Press,* published briefly in the late 1920's by the Connecticut Newspaper Alliance. The first *West Hartford News,* published by ex-*Courant* Reporter Aubrey Maddock and Thomas B. Dawson lasted from February 27, 1931 to January 29, 1932. After a seven month lapse, Dawson started the free distribution *Metropolitan Shopping News,* which was sold to the West Hartford Publishing Company, on March 1, 1947 and converted into a paid circulation weekly *West Hartford News,* expanded in size and in character.

There have been the Philistines on the West Hartford scene. The publisher of an early weekly paper is celebrated for a running verbal war he waged against George Bernard Shaw; Frank Lloyd Wright, internationally famed architect, ran into astringent opposition when he came here to build a modern theater in the middle of the Town. But there have been torchbearers, too. For twenty years West Hartford has enjoyed fine ballet, music, and art classes in public and private schools and studios. Many have been the contributions of the West Hartford Art League, formed in January of 1934 by Charles Tracy and Sanford Low.

Count Robert MacEnroe, Broadway author of the Jose Ferrer hit, "The Silver Whistle" once lived on Loomis Drive. And Actress Katherine Hepburn came home from her early disappointments and later triumphs

to share the comradeship of her family's home on Bloomfield Avenue. West Hartford school teacher, Virginia Chase, has written a novel about the tribulations of school teachers, which Macmillan put out last fall, and which received fine critical response. Miss Chase won the Avery Hopwood award in 1940 for her writing. Everett Ripley, another West Hartford writer, has 8,000 aticles on India listed in the Columbia-Lippincott Gazetteer of the world.

One cultural event of the 1935 season is noteworthy. It was a grand pinochle tournament in which a local man, having wor the national pinochle title in Seattle, Washington, returned to West Hartford and challenged all the other "colonels" (this was apparently the honorary title given pinochle players those days). In a great tourney on the green, the champion, "Colonel" Henry Kottenhoff met the challenger, Fire Chief Thomas Donnelly, in a Donnybrook that was transmitted over public-address amplifiers around the town.

From the earliest days of the village, when Governor Winthrop of the Bay colony came visiting with the first three-and-a-half inch telescope in the colonies, and one bright August evening in 1664 from a West Division hill observed a star pronounced as the fifth satellite of Jupiter, there have been luminaries in the West Hartford skies. The Town represents a way of life that is fertile soil for the cultural growth of its citizens and in its time it has contributed its full share of creative artists.

XVI. TOWN ON WHEELS

WEST Hartford was willing to put up with dusty roads in summer and ankle-deep mud in winter as long as the Town could rely on the horse and the trolley. But when the automobile came into its own after World War I, a loud campaign for better streets had as its battlecry: "There's no mud like West Hartford mud."

This revelation was not new. In 1792, the *Hartford Courant* deplored the fact that the clay and loam roads over which the farmers brought their produce into the city made traveling well nigh impossible in the wet months. By 1810, the turnpike movement was getting action on the state's growing network of main thoroughfares, but long before and for long after that the horse-back rider and the farmer in his cart had the familiar red clay of the West Division to contend with.

In colonial times there was no demand for anything better. The routes simply went up over hills or around them. Nobody had thought of grading. The handsome ancient trees disappeared and younger ones appeared along the highways, or were set out by people like Edward Keeney, who planted the young maples along Pleasant Street which he had given the Town as entrance to its new Fairview Cemetery. When Stephen Hosmer rode out to look at the land his father had bought, he reported that the knee-deep mire along the old paths made this first settler think twice about the West Division's virtues as a site for the Hosmer mill.

There were then three beaten tracks across the West Division, all of them heading toward thriving Farmington. But Stephen Hosmer's mill needed a brook more than it needed a road, so he located it on North Main Street where the brook crosses. As others followed him, the road that joined their farm houses—usually placed in the middle of the long lots from Quaker Lane to Mountain Road—came to be the main pike, its sweeping curves designed to run past each farm. It was planned 132 feet wide, but the wagons used only a part of it.

Of the roads from east to west, the most northerly followed along the Albany Avenue line to Main Street, then out Flagg Road and over the mountain. The South Middle Road to Farmington, from Barnard Park in Hartford, followed the line of Park Street and Park Road to Mountain Road and thence west of Selden Hill to what later became Mountain Spring Road. The South road to Farmington was the more heavily traveled, its route much like that of present day New Britain Avenue to Corbin's Corner and on to Farmington village.

In 1798, Talcott Mountain Turnpike made the north road into its Albany toll road, putting a toll-gate on the crest of the hill just west of Mountain Road. In 1825 there was one tavern for every mile between

Hartford and New Hartford along this famous route, five of them in West Hartford. On West Hartford Four Corners (Bishop's Corner), Barney Collins, Aaron Goodman and Major Whitney entertained travelers who found food and lodging cheaper, by far, outside the city than in. At the toll-gate, Erastus Phelps had a hostelry which stayed in his family for three generations. On the Hartford-West Hartford border was the most popular of all West Hartford taverns, that of Sidney Wadsworth, breeder of fine horses and successful farmer. An 1838 map of the Center showed a hotel just west of the white Congregational church, but the first full-fledged hotels in the Town—and virtually the last — were not built until the Charter Oak Park track brought in a flood of sportsmen after the Civil War.

They would buggy out from Hartford, or arrive by trolley or the New Haven, Hartford & Springfield Railroad and detrain at the Charter Oak station. Gene Hyde's Charter Oak Hotel, with its long veranda, was but a short step away from the station, over a man-made lake attractively landscaped and decorated day and night. Gondolas added their festive note. This imposing frame hotel burned to the ground in 1880, but was quickly replaced under genial Johnny Donahue. When a young man lost his fortune on the horses at the Park, the state passed an anti-gambling act, and the track was closed. Early in the 1900's this hotel went up in flames, and West Hartford has not had a hotel since, though it has often been talked.

One honest road, indeed, is Mountain Road, laid out with its tortuous turns and hills in 1737 eleven feet wide and seeming no wider today. Along the eastern boundary of the Town a road now known as Quaker Lane was opened in 1796. Four years later the Farmington Turnpike was opened, though the original approach to the Center from downtown was between what is now Fern Street and Farmington Avenue. In 1837 some Farmington residents petitioned for a shorter route to Hartford than the hilly and round-about South Middle Road, the result being Tunxis Road. In 1850 a connection between New Britain Avenue and Park Road (now Sedgwick) was laid out as Ridgewood Road.

When the first tax rate of the new Town was set in 1854 the upkeep on the roads alone was placed at 20 mills, or two cents on each dollar of assessment. The decision on taxes came following the first Town meeting on June 19, 1854, when Colonel Solomon Flagg was elected first selectman, John Whitman, the first Town Clerk, and Samuel Whitman, the first Town Treasurer. The dozen crude highways, criss-crossing the community—dusty, muddy, snow-drifted by turns—were a heavy burden to the young Town, even though road work was simple. Holes were filled by plowing in dirt from the side of the road. When a new road was needed, gravel was carted from the big pits at Concord Street off Farmington Avenue, or from the smaller pit on Asylum Avenue near Prospect. The farmers' frequent complaints were passed along to the eight highway surveyors, one for each of the segments into which the Town was divided. It took only two years to find that this divided authority wouldn't work, so three surveyors were put in charge for the whole Town. Finally this responsibility was shifted to the Selectmen, and then to the Town Manager and Town Council.

It was not until 1889 that the Good Roads Movement got into full swing, and a plan devised for macadamizing the main thoroughfares. First to be surfaced was Main Street and then Albany Avenue. At about the same time, the major parts of Farmington New Britain, Park, Quaker Lane, and Prospect Avenues were included in a $50,000 macadamizing program that captured the imagination of the Town and was financed by the first big bond issue in its history.

The farmers who had long been expected to care for the roads past their places were glad to sell the cobble-stones, accumulated in their fences, to lay the foundations of these improved highways. The turn of the century found West Hartford with an enviable 20 miles of surfaced roads. Much of the road improvement in the Town over the past century has been the leveling of the hills, and the straightening of the highways. This "leveling out" process, which became one of the trade-marks of the machine age, did things to old Farmington Avenue which would make it unrecognizable to the twenty-

odd families who lived along it when West Hartford got its own charter back in 1854.

The heavily wooded wagon trail which led from Hartford to bustling Farmington and the Farmington Canal, a hundred and more years ago, was up hill and down dale throughout its length. Hamilton Hill, later to become Vanderbilt Hill, and now West Hill, was too much for street cars to climb, so it was leveled off towards Prospect Avenue on the east and Quaker Lane on the west. Most of the great trees in that area fell victim to the efficiency of the selectmen because they hindered the melting of snow and ice in the winter, and kept the highway muddy. In later years the axe destroyed the shade trees in the Center because they were a hazard to traffic.

There are still those alive who can remember the sharp dip the Farmington Turnpike made in its approach to the wooden bridge at Trout Brook. Two or three times the high banks at Goodman Green, which lay along the hidden stone ridge, were lowered to ease the highway incline. West of the Center, between LaSalle Road and Walden Street there used to be a sharp hill, and at its foot two little brooks came together to run where LaSalle Road now is. There were more hills at Staples Place and Cadwell Streets, where horse-drawn scoops and then steam-shovels have eaten away at the grade. By the side of the narrow little railed bridge over the brook at the foot of Gin Still Hill (east of Albany Place), a handy footpath led down to the water. Drivers passing there, stopped to water their teams, dry from the long pull of full wagons to market. The houses that lined the street a hundred years ago have nearly all been torn down, moved, or drastically remodeled. But one touch remains immune to time—the stone mile-posts by which a driver could measure his progress from the Old State House clear out to Litchfield. There is one just east of Quaker Lane, signifying the third mile from the old Capitol building. Another rests unobtrusively at the corner of Four Mile Road, and a third marks the fifth mile in the tiny triangle where the Boulevard and Farmington Avenue meet just east of Albany Place, each of them once welcome markers along the lonely journey to and from the City.

As building encroached upon the width of the main arteries, along came a bold young fellow who wanted to reverse the process by widening one of them. Jessamine Street, Vera Street, Doris Street. The names of these three short, quiet streets in the heart of the residential district overlooking Trout Brook between the Boulevard and Park Road are about all that remain of a dream that young man pursued, better than half a century ago.

Frederick Rockwell came from Missouri, and he wanted to show how to do things. As he became active in West Hartford affairs, thanks to his enthusiasm and his persuasive tongue, the possibilities of real estate development opened before him. In his thirties he almost single-handedly promoted an electric trolley service from West Hartford Center to Unionville. Those were busy days when travelers from Hartford alighted from the "Hartford & Wethersfield" railway coach in the Center and transferred to the Unionville cars.

Fred Rockwell, with an eye to the development of a beautiful residential suburb, got together enough capital to buy nearly all the land between Farmington Avenue and Park Road, and from Mountain Road east almost to Prospect. In 1895, just as he was turning forty, the energetic fellow got the idea of running the Unionville trolley on into Hartford through his land. Local skeptics watched with interest as he drew up plans for a broad boulevard with a wide park in the center and a road on either side. Along this parkway he planted a long row of trees between which he proposed to run the trolley. With his easy persuasiveness he got the Hartford Board of Water Commissioners, who were laying a new main from No. 1 Reservoir into Hartford, to follow his boulevard. Poles were set along part of the route to carry the magic electricity for the trolley, and a bridge was built across Trout Brook just east of Raymond Road.

When the dauntless Fred Rockwell actually laid some curved track around the corner on South Main Street to connect the Unionville line with the proposed Boulevard line, the Hartford Street Railway Company made its howls heard in the legislature. The line to Unionville was joined to the ex-

isting track down Farmington Avenue and Rockwell abandoned the Boulevard route. However, the Boulevard parkway was completed from South Main Street down to Raymond Road as it stands today, and Rockwell began to sell lots along it. When his fellow Townsmen did not go along with his vision of continuing development in the Boulevard area, the project began to bog down. He was only able to open three more streets which he named after his daughters, Jessamine, Vera, and the one-year-old Dora.

Not far from Fred Rockwell's ill-fated Boulevard with its broad parkway, there is a unique residential circle that combines some of the laments of Rockwell's dream. Washington Circle, a self-contained residential park has retained its identity through nearly forty years of West Hartford growth. During the first World War, in order to help solve the acute housing problem in Greater Hartford, a private development company invited a well-known New York architect, T. C. Desmond, to erect 101 houses on three sites, Zion Street, Atwood's Corner, and the farm-site to be known as Washington Circle. Twenty-five of the original forty-five residents of Washington Circle came from insurance home offices, twenty-three of them from Aetna or Travelers. The reason was no mystery. The two companies, along with the Phoenix State Bank, made the Circle a reality, so their employees got first crack at the trim frame houses that went up.

When the original developers began to sag, banker Leon Broadhurst came to the rescue, and the insurance companies helped complete the houses then under construction. As the families from the insurance fraternity, commuting daily on the trolley that went out Park Street to Quaker Lane, began to settle the Circle, a spirit of comraderie developed. The Washington Circle Improvement Association was formed. Its principal purpose was to buy up adjoining vacant property. It met with limited success; but over the decades, Washington Circle solidarity has remained, and many of the original owners still reside in this unusual island cut off from the main traffic arteries of West Hartford.

Half a century before Fred Rockwell's dream fell through, Fred Brace had a successful omnibus line from his home on the corner of Farmington Avenue and Dale Street into the City center. He bought a plain vehicle which some said looked more like an ice wagon than a public conveyance, though there were windows along the sides and rear steps that hung from the body. Every morning at nine, Teamster Brace would hitch up the horses and pull a load of passengers down Farmington Avenue. During the day he would haul businessmen to lunch at Lord's Hill and wait to take them back to their offices. At four o'clock he started the homeward trip, arriving for an early supper.

Various other trackless, horse-drawn omnibuses made trips into Town. Some were fancily painted like an Abbott & Downing coach, with ornamented bodies, a sturdy luggage rack on top, and a driver's seat perched high. The omnibuses ran until the Hartford & Wethersfield Horse Railway took up its turn-table at Prospect Avenue and extended the line west to the Center in 1889, providing hourly horse-drawn cars on tracks at 10 cents a trip. In the winter the horses were unhitched in the Center and sheltered under the shed in the rear of the old St. James's Church until the return trip.

In 1894, electric trolley service, which had proven successful in Baltimore seven years before, was brought to the Town. Trolleys running 30 miles an hour spread through the countryside after the Baltimore experiments, until it was possible to go from New York to Chicago by trolley, or from New York to Boston by way of Hartford for $2.40 in nickles and dimes along the way. Although the trolley reached its peak in the early twenties, it caused more excitement before the gasoline buggy stole the Town's imagination. Everybody loved to climb aboard the open bench cars that whizzed out to Unionville on summer evenings. Special trolleys could be chartered for club outings, and even a black funeral car saw its use. All that passed when the Connecticut Company absorbed the many little independent trolley lines, in 1934, started a bus line from the Old State House to West Hartford and then in 1939 discontinued the trolley from downtown to Prospect Avenue.

West Hartford's only rail connection has been the New York, New Haven & Hartford's tracks cutting across the southeastern tip of the Town, where once the Elmwood station was a busy commuting stop on the main line. But it might have been otherwise. A few years following the Civil War, when railroad development was at its most feverish pitch, a group of Farmington promoters became anxious to run a passenger and freight line from New York state through Litchfield and into Hartford either by way of Farmington and West Hartford, or farther north though Simsbury and Bloomfield.

It was left up to the towns to decide which wanted it, the measure of interest to be the amount of stock sold in each town. Big mass meetings were called in West Hartford and handbills plastered the place with siren songs of putting West Hartford "on the Railroad!" The sponsors promised a handsome station on Main Street, either north or south of Farmington Avenue, whichever route was preferred. Circulars offered a bonanza for the Town—gleaming factories with belching smoke-stacks and sky-scraping business blocks in a boom town along the Noyes River.

Many people in Town were bitterly disappointed when the promoters were promised more financial support if they would run the railroad through Simsbury, Tariffville Notch and Bloomfield to Hartford. But the opponents of the railroad happily saw West Hartford's die cast then as a community of homes where the locomotive's whistle would be heard only far in the distance. The Town was to put its main reliance upon the rubber-tired wheels of the auto, went ahead with a paving construction program, which, in the Centennial Year, saw more than 150 miles of paved and carefully maintained highways where only wagon ruts had been.

And as that century turned, the controversy had shifted to the possible route for a broad six-lane highway to carry traffic East and West through Hartford's western gateway, relieving the traffic congestion which had become one of the symbols of American culture. The State's proposal for a broad concrete strip parallel to and south of Farmington Avenue, running to the east of Trout Brook in the Center and then swinging southwest to Corbin's Corner, had its opposition from West Hartford leaders who feared the bisecting of the Town and wanted a more southerly route through less highly settled residential areas.

XVII. COMING OF AGE

IN the year 1878, Mr. Birdsey G. Northrop came to visit the Town, and the muddy foot-pathways along West Hartford roads began to disappear. Tidy gravel walks took their place, running west from the Center toward Mountain Road, north to the brook crossing, and south to Park Road. From the Center to the Hartford line a wooden walk was proudly laid. All in all, Birdsey Northrop had done his usual job of getting a town to spruce up.

Strangely, he was not an engineer, but the State Board of Education secretary, who came to Town to put on a Teachers' Institute at the Congregational Church. A campaigner for better streets and public places wherever he went, Northrop here inspired citizens to organize the West Hartford Village Improvement Society on Feb. 26, 1878. Though the course of the Society's service has changed completely over the years, its public dedication has been its constant star. In 1871, Scotsman Paul Thomson immigrated to West Hartford to farm a big market garden at Park Road and South Main Street His keen concern for the beauty of the Town made him an easy choice to head the new Society. Under Thomson, whose nurserymen sons carried on his tradition, the Village Improvement Society encouraged the building of walks, the planting of trees, the installation of kerosene street lamps along Farmington Avenue and Main Street, and the care of all these innovations. (Illuminating gas had barely crossed the Town line in 1871.) Anson Chappell offered to give $50, so William H. Hall, Joseph Brace and J. A. Griswold were named to study the wisdom of a long plank walk from Prospect to Main.

When work got underway, the men built walks during the summer evenings while their wives sponsored strawberry festivals, debates, lectures and "entertainments" to raise money for lumber, nails and gravel.

The walks needed lamp-posts, so two were voted by the Society for Farmington Avenue and three more were put up between the postoffice and Thomson's corner. At the corners, sign posts costing 26 cents each were set. This done, the Society launched clean-up drives twice a year and set a goal of town-wide refuse collections. Responding to the call to beautify the village of 1,700, hundreds came out to the "sidewalk rallies" and "fencing bees," that provided a chance to volunteer a half day's work and enjoy the chatter of neighbors. Those who owned horses offered to keep the new walks clear of snow; the lamps were lighted and cleaned by those who lived nearest. All these things Paul Thomson and his co-workers in the Society fostered through the transition years as the Town grew up and its care became big business requiring, today, street and park departments of seventy-one men. By 1914,

most of the Society's original functions were taken over by the Town government, but the Society took on another job of human help. Annually, for years, it raised thousands of dollars in the long and successful fight against tuberculosis.

Meanwhile, Town employees took over Town housekeeping where the Improvement Society left off. Not only did trash and garbage, maintenance of roads and street lights become official responsibilities, so also did the problems of long-range village improvement. Toward that end, in 1923 the first Town Plan was drawn. Josiah Woods, who was West Hartford's "Mr. Zoner" through many of the formative years, tackled the Town's growth in this spirit:

> "The common sense of the average citizen leads to a degree of order in the home, the store, and the factory that is all but lacking in the life and work of the community as a whole. For want of a well-considered plan of building development each man builds without reference to his neighbor. The result is chaotic."

As a cure, Woods proposed that West Hartford, with the approval of the State Legislature, lead the way. Under his direction, a zoning and planning group, first in the State and one of the first in the country, looked for somebody who understood the new science of town growth. From several they chose a man of few words but plenty of action and ideas, Robert Whitten, then planning and zoning consultant for Cleveland. Whitten arrived in West Hartford in the fall of 1923, brought an assistant to work with the Town engineering and legal staff, traveled back and forth himself. In less than six months he produced a prophetic report and a comprehensive plan to guide the development of the Town.

Reminding the taxpayers that "zoning is only part of a general planning program", he recommended prompt planning for the unbuilt areas. He recognized that West Hartford had a distinct and vigorous personality, and he wanted to see the Town built around that ideal.

One of his fears, however, was that "the open, wholesome and beautiful residence development is ever a fruitful field for those who see an opportunity for gain by dividing existing lots, building over a larger percentage of the area, building close to the sidelot lines, or erecting a huge apartment house in the midst of a single family section." But he added that at the 'very low average of two families to the acre,' West Hartford could house a population of 138,000 in the years that were ahead. (This estimate was revised in 1954 when there was room for 7,000 more dwelling units under the existing zoning. These could bring the Town to 90,000 people. But pressure for high concentration of population along the eastern portion was resulting in more apartment houses.)

While there should be no trouble finding room for more people, Mr. Whitten predicted cars would be more troublesome. "The future traffic problem," he observed three decades ago, when 1954's twenty-thousand cars would have sounded like an auto-maker's rosy dream, "will be primarily one of finding space for automobiles in the various business centers."

"As has often happened in other American communities, the instinct that caused the founders to build more wisely than they knew was not so strong in their descendants," Whitten observed. The Common (from Quaker Lane to Prospect) "set aside forever for the use and benefit of all the inhabitants of the towne," was cut up into farm lots and then into building lots for the benefit of the living at the time the division was made. Town roads, laid out in generous widths even for mid-century traffic, were encroached upon until reduced to half their original width.

Departing with the expert's well-earned fee in his pocket, Whitten gave the Town some fatherly advice. He suggested a network of parkways in the "unsubdivided areas" to include the rough low-lying land adjacent to the streams, and a 'mile-wide' open belt along the Talcott ridge. All this was part of a comprehensive plan for the Town. "The need is urgent," he said. "The opportunity is golden but fleeting." Part of his plan was a series of small shopping centers at regular half-mile intervals along the main arteries. Not anticipating the develop- of the major shopping centers and the nearly two cars per family, Whitten planned so no

one should have to walk more than a quarter of a mile to a grocery store. Thirty years later, the Town Plan and Zoning commission had whittled away a third of Mr Whitten's neighborhood business zones, but his idea of more parkways in the unsubdivided sections was included in the Town's second plan, developed in 1930 by the Town Park and Cemetery Commission. Its five members laid out a thousand of the Town's 15,000 acres in a handsome plan, to cover from Fern to Albany, and from North Main to Mountain Road. While the central, eastern and southern parts of West Hartford had begun to fill up, this wooded, rolling section was still sparsely settled. In the ten years since the new charter had created a planning body, its members had seen the Town mushroom from 8,000 to 24,000 in 1930. They knew that a far greater growth was to come, and they feared for an uninspired, conventional and crowded community.

The big tract laid out from Fern to Albany was designed to preserve the trees and "breathing spaces." Asylum Avenue was to sweep northwest through the area, a broad 100-foot parkway. A similar boulevard was to start where Fern crosses Trout Brook, following the stream to the north, and then swinging west. This proposal followed the thinking of both Whitten and local men like George W. Staples of Staples Place, who had advocated a parkway the whole length of Trout Brook from Mountain Road, meandering through the Town to Elmwood. In those days, since the brookside land was not primarily suitable for farming and not popular for homes, from time to time many of the owners along the brook had offered their land as a gift to the Town. But no clamor arose for such a Town investment. Whether any of these original hopes can be salvaged would be determined as the Town's first full-time paid Town Planner, Richard Brown, who went on the job in the Centennial Year, set out upon a comprehensive study of the community's future.

The 1930 Plan Commission, noting the scarcity of park areas, regarded the brook development as a key move in the growth of that area. Public acceptance of the plan ran high, and William Hall, recording the history of the Town, ventured that it eventually would come about. But like the present Town Plan and Zoning Commission, which came into being with the 1935 Charter revision (and could hope for more powers under the second Charter revision, undertaken in 1954), the men who acted on zoning matters in 1930 had only the power to study and to recommend. They could plan, but they could not build. They could urge, but not compel. Action was reserved for the individual owners, unless an active citizenry wanted it otherwise. Thus it was that the very first residential development in the area north of Fern Street ignored the Town's recommended master-plan for the thousand strategic acres. Growth took its private course, guided stringently by the new building code developed in 1945 by Building Inspector Arthur N. Rutherford. The big Fern Street idea, which had consumed so many hours of technical study and skill, was pigeon-holed all the while West Hartford spurted on to double (to 50,000) its population in the twenty years of Depression and the war that followed. In the post-War years, pent-up building reached toward $125,000,000 under Mr. Rutherford's careful eye.

If West Hartford wore blinders in its real-estate promotions, it made up in other ways. In 1919, West Hartford became the first town in the State to adopt the council-manager form of government. Although there were 150 towns, mostly in the mid-West, with city managers, West Hartford was an Eastern pioneer. Its population was then 8,000; its size, 23 square miles; its first Town Manager, B. I. Miller, former First Selectman of Avon. The grand list of taxable property was twenty million dollars; the budget was half a million; the tax rate 18 mills. Its prospects of growth: staggering. By 1954 the population was to increase six-fold, the budget twelve-fold under inflationary pressures, taxes go to thirty-three-and-a-half mills. The Board of Finance, far-sighted to see the need for business in government, memorialized, in February of 1919, that "if West Hartford is to grow, as we have every reason to anticipate, the time has come when some plan looking to a more efficient system of accounting, bookkeeping, purchasing supplies, and general business management should be thought out and put into execu-

tion." Some could remember with discomfort the year before World War I when, because the assessment list was rejected in a quarrel between farmers and residential owners over the value of land, the Town could lay no tax, and had to borrow a year's expenses. Next year it cost double. They did not want to see that happen again.

To achieve more financial order a seven-man committee headed by Adolph Sternberg studied two months in 1919, then recommended the hiring of a town manager under a Town Council. Ben Miller did not find his task easy, but he soon convinced even the most outspoken critics of the new form of government that he was talking and acting business—their business. He stayed fourteen years, and when he retired, the Town was firmly rooted in the town manager idea. To succeed him, the Council—which got in 1935 appointive powers over the top boards of the Town—picked a man who had been in West Hartford government as long as Miller had. Rodney L. Loomis, a Rensselear Polytechnic Institute graduate, came to Town after World War I and had risen by 1933 to the post of Town Engineer. Meticulous and taciturn, "Rod" Loomis took over Ben Miller's reins. His steady hand guided the Town through the troubled Thirties, the war-ridden Forties, and on into the booming Fifties. Eligible in a year for retirement, Town Manager Loomis could look back upon a mountain of accomplishment in the building of a town.

He had hardly been in office a year when the long-delayed replacement of the Town Hall had to be faced, and the long argument it stimulated was as bitter as any the Town had known. Right from the day in 1898 that the brick appendage was added to the south side of the old white church which long served as the Town Hall at the crossroads of Farmington Avenue and North Main Street, many a prideful resident had resented this expedient solution for housing the Town's official family. But it was to be half a century before the old brick structure was to be torn down and the wall of the church restored.

By the early 1930's, the overcrowding of the Town's office building was more than most citizens could stand. The new Town Manager found he had to share an office with five others, and every department was stumbling over itself. But the final shove in the direction of a new Town Hall was the Depression allocation by the federal government of four billion dollars for public works.

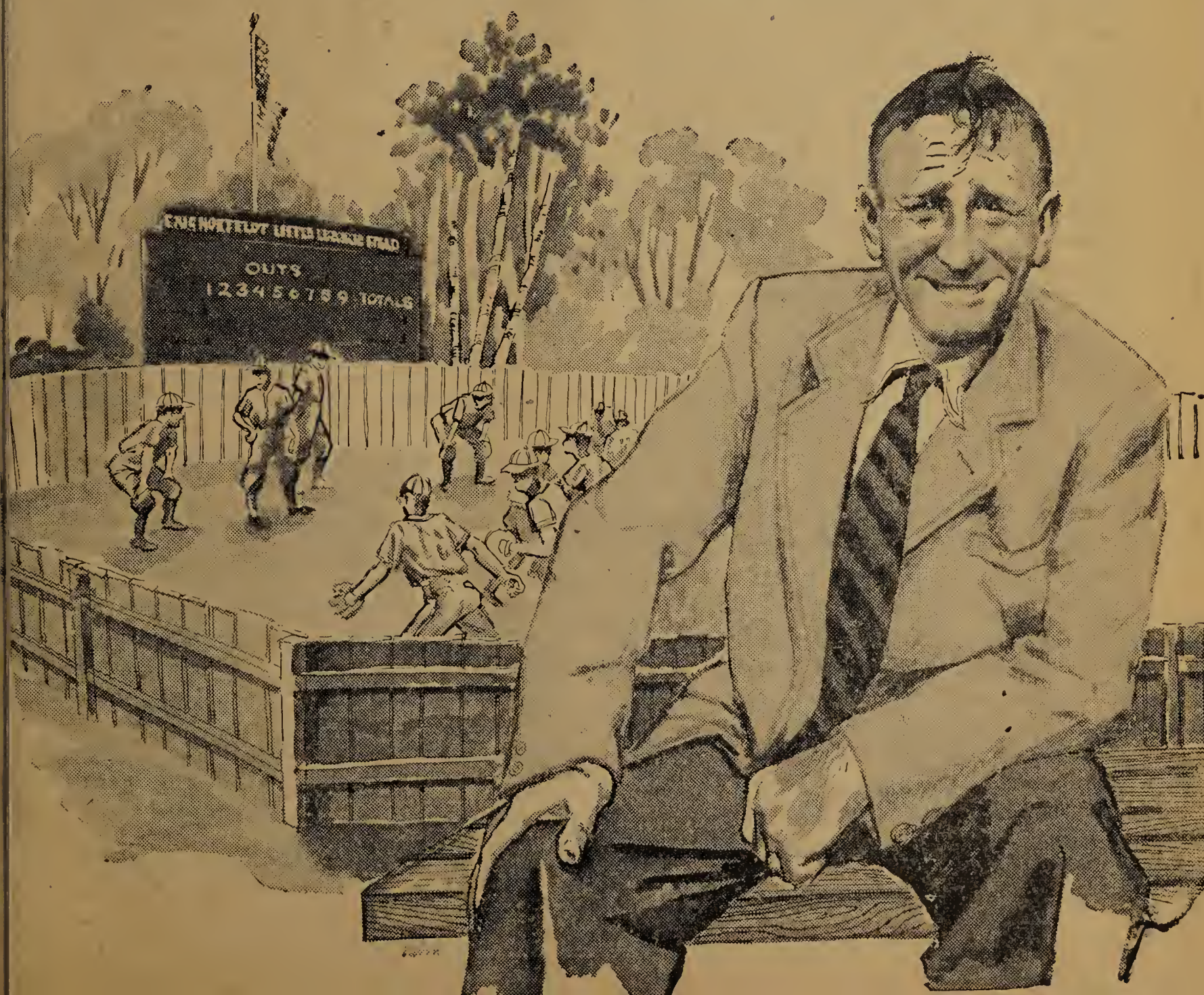
In 1943, Council President Max Goldenthal selected a Town Hall site committee from among the 15 councilmen, put Dennis F. Ahern at its head. The group finally settled on 400 feet along South Main Street which could be purchased from the Congregational church. The Board of Finance approved the spending of $100,000 for the land, but when it learned that the new building would cost $250,000, there arose some question in its mind, and violent objection from some of the voters. On October 1, 1935, a record crowd jammed the old Town Hall. Some opposed the increased tax burden. Some felt schools or sewers, or even streets, should come first. Another fought a new Town Hall because the Town had turned him down on his idea to build an $18,000 swimming pool in one section of Town. But perhaps the biggest obstacle was the unwillingness of many to accept any bounty from Washington. The call for "spunk" and "the American spirit", brought cheers, yet the whole meeting was swung around by a remark from John C. Willian that "we pay for it anyway." A week later, the Council okehed the spending of $240,000 if the Public Works Administration would foot sixty percent of it.

This heated meeting recalled another in the early 1890's when Charles Cook headed a faction that wanted to tear down the 1834 church and replace it with a $33,000 three-unit Town building. After weeks of discussion, the idea was about to pass in a Town meeting, when William Hall stood up. He was sorry he was late, having remained home in prayerful meditation. Then he added, "As a member of this church, having been brought up from childhood, nurtured into manhood, protected by the teachings of its pastors and deacons, I, like most of you, my fellow citizens, look upon these walls as hallowed." When he sat down, after tracing the part of the church in the lives of many present, the vote to tear down the church was swamped. Cook never forgave Hall, and they were on opposite sides in the 1923-4

effort to join the suburbs to Hartford. State Senator Cook had been rankling ever since 1912, when he lost a fight to prevent the Town from financing the Center sewer system, to be repaid by assessing the property-owners. Cook's "East Side" had solved its own over-flowing cess-pool problem years before by getting a legislative charter that enabled them privately to finance their sewer system as an "East Side Sewer and Fire District." He thought every other district should solve its problems the same way, but his public fears that the Town was going broke were ridiculed by Mr. Hall, and did not convince people. Hall never forgave his adversary either. He left him out of his history altogether.

Cook was also the inspiration for another memorable squabble at a Town meeting in 1919, when the Town's legislative Representative Oliver R. Beckwith, hand-picked by Cook, was called in to explain his opposition to the Prohibition amendment. The Town had many 'dry" adherents. Lawyer Beckwith was instructed by his Townsmen assembled that he represented his constituents, not his own view. This was one of the rare times since Edward Stanley was first sent to the Legislature in 1855, that the Town took strong issue with the men it sent to the Capitol. Beckwith was the last of the one-man delegations to the House. The Town had grown so large that since 1921, when Thomas W. Russell served with Huntington Meech, there have been two representatives, almost solidly Republican.

On a brilliant spring day, March 10, 1936, a week before the Town was to be plunged into the three-day darkness of the great flood, the Town Manager sealed the official documents, including the newly adopted Town Charter and the current newspapers into the cornerstone of the new Town Hall, where thereafter the Town Council



(shortly cut to seven for expedition), could meet in dignified surroundings. Nine months later, the Town staff moved into the roomy quarters which swallowed them up, along with the years of controversy; Rodney L. Loomis was firmly launched as Town Manager. Growth was to be the challenge of his long regime. In 1934, what had been a village was to see a crowd of 20,000 along Farmington Avenue as a giant mardi gras opened the newly widened and surfaced street. George Flagg strode up and down the Avenue, flinging handfuls of pennies, with hundreds of children at his heels. Police Sergeant John Keene needed the help of five supernumeraries to prevent accidents and traffic jams.

All this was part of the growing spirit of the Town, a spirit often heightened by the mutual sacrifices of wartime. Just as the loss of 20 Townsmen in the Revolution had given the scattered farmers a sense of joint destiny, and the service of 174 "Boys in Blue" during the 1860's had brought newly incorporated West Hartford a greater measure of identity, so those who went off to the Spanish-American war added to its tradition. Private Irving Dimock of West Hill was the first of his Company K, 1st Connecticut Volunteer Regiment, to lose his life in the liberation of Cuba. He came down with typhoid at camp and came home to die. Robert Beebe, who served in the Quartermaster Corps, followed a proud family history. His father had fought in the Civil War, and uncle had fought in Mexico, and his great-grandfather had been in the Revolution. Fred Cadwell of Elmwood went also to free the "little brown brothers", as did Howard Flagg, Robert Miller and Forrest Reynolds, all of whom served with Company F. Edward Whiton spent three years with Company A of the 22nd U. S. Infantry, a regular Army outfit, seeing service in the Philippines. So did Simon Bush and James Coleman of the 22nd Infantry, Company H.

Nineteen years later there were the 314 West Hartford boys who went off to war in France. Twenty-two of them did not come back. Of these, two have come to symbolize the rest—the dead, and those like Julius Ward of the 104th, whose Distinguished Service Cross told how he, a runner at Verdun, spent three days under fire without relief, after his relay stations were wiped out in the big "Hun" push in 1918.

Of the two symbolic casualties, Robert Hayes was born in Avon, but grew up on Farmington Avenue. A basketball star at Hall High, he worked in M. J. Burnham's pioneering grocery store and belonged to Troop "B" at the Armory. One of the first to go overseas, on October 23, 1918, he got it. A week after the Armistice, when his family was expecting a cable from him saying he was safe, they received instead the terse telegram from the War Department, "We regret to inform you . . . . " From the other end of the Town came Frank Velhage, who grew up on his grandfather's Oakwood Avenue farm. When war came, he volunteered in the Navy, serving on the battleship U.S.S. South Carolina. In a shipboard accident, Frank Velhage was badly crushed and died in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital. After World War I, thirty-four veterans formed Hayes-Velhage American Legion Post No. 96, whose membership was to swell to 600.

As events turned out, the world had not been made altogether safe for democracy by the sacrifice of those who served. A generation later, West Hartford youth again was called to take up arms, and 103 were to give their lives for their country in World War II.

For the 208th Coast Artillery Anti-aircraft regiment of the Connecticut National Guard, it all began on January 6, 1941, when the unit was federalized into service eleven months before Pearl Harbor. They were one of the first to be called into active duty and were dispatched to Camp Edwards. On March 1, the draft reached into West Hartford. Some went to Camp Edwards to join the 208th; others volunteered as aviation cadets, as naval personnel, or just signed up for duty. Most expected to be home at the end of a year. That hope stretched into "maybe 18 months." On that "day of infamy," December 7, 1941, all knew they wouldn't be going home for a long, long while.

When the Japanese flew over Pearl

Harbor, a West Hartford pilot, Gordon Sterling, rose with others from Hickam Field to challenge the enemy. In the first blaze of the conflict, a West Hartford man made the final sacrifice, and the Town's major playfield was to honor his memory. The 208th had been home for the weekend, was summoned back to base. They set up positions around Boston Harbor, then shortly moved out to Australia. Soon the casualty lists began coming home.

Lieutenants Fred and James Carey, inseparable brothers, crashed in the same plane in Indo-China in 1945. In France, the year before, two other West Hartford brothers, Raymond and Lucian Parr, met death within a few days of each other. The list mounted relentlessly from the first day of battle to the last, for all the Town to see and for all the Town to mourn.

The same spirit that memorialized the sacrifices of Hayes and Velhage in World War I moved the organizers of Veterans of Foreign Wars Hannon-Hatch Post. No. 9929 to honor two men killed in World War II. Lt. James Watson Hatch, of Norwood Road, was killed on his second mission over North Africa in April, 1943, and in November of the same year, Private James Joseph Hannon, infantryman, was killed in Italy as the Allies advanced painfully northward. In the same period, a second American Legion Carey-Phelps Post No. 172, recognized the contribution of the two Carey boys and Lt. Walter Benjamin Phelps, a Hall high and Worcester Polytechnic Institute graduate, who went down with the U. S. S. Lagarto.

Then that war was over and those who were coming back, came back. But peace was still not yet won. Five years later, more West Hartford boys were sent to far-off places. Five men killed in Korea; two reported missing; one apparently captured. Boys like Bernie Kelley. Bernie grew up around Talcott junior high school, went to Hall, joined St. Bridget's Boys' Brigade. Shortly after his eighteenth birthday he enlisted in the Army. May, 1948. Two years later he shipped out to the Far East. September, Korea; December, Chosen Reservoir. He was twenty-three when his family got the cryptic message. He was "presumed dead."

On the morning of Easter Sunday in the Town's Centennial year, the melodic peal of a new set of sanctuary chimes rang out at St. Bridget's in memory of Sergeant Bernard L. Kelly, who gave his life for his Town and for his country.

* * *

Before Stephen Hosmer were the Dutch at the Point, trading eagerly with the Indians. Then came the English with an historic charter that extended their state "to the South Sea on the West parte." As the new nation was cut into states, and finally forty-eight, Connecticut found itself one of the smallest yet one of the most peopled. And then nestled in the center of a great industrial commonwealth, a small town by a small stream. From that restless stream, first nourishment for flourishing farms and power for infant industry. Flowing now for the sheer fun of it, the brook that a Town's history is written in, runs silently past the fourteen thousand homes which, upon the Town's 100th anniversary, tell the West Hartford story.

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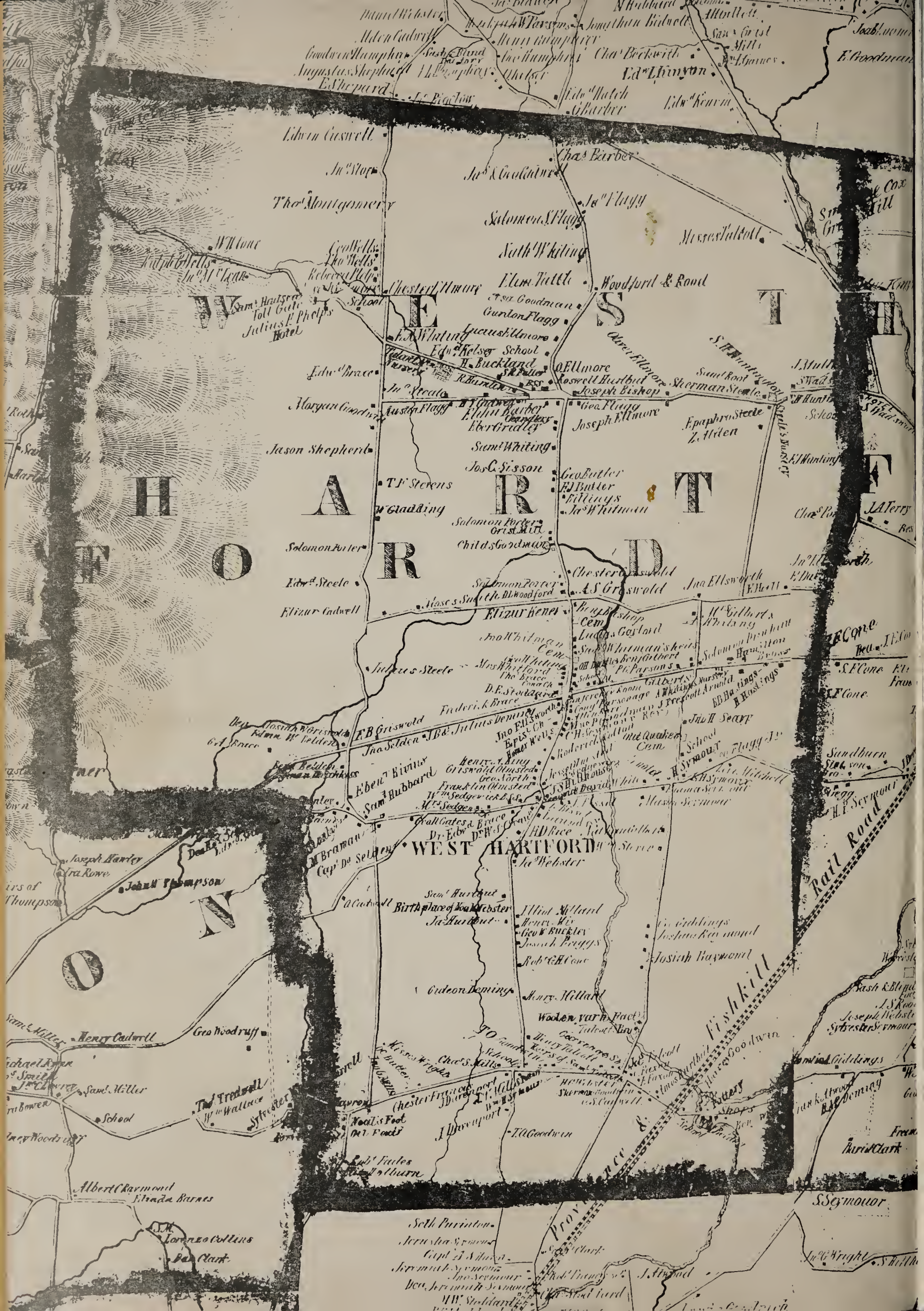
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Hotel
Toll Gate
School
Cem
Grist Mill
Factory
Shops
Pottery
Parsonage
Meeting House
Quaker Cem
Burial Place
Sandburn
Seymour
Albert Charmond
Blanche Barnes
Lorenzo Collins
Seth Purington
Jeremiah Seymour
Capt. Ezra Wilcox
Jno. Seymour
Dea. Jeremiah Seymour
Jno. Atwood
Chestnut Ridge
Chestnut Hill
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Sherman Steele
Joseph Bishop
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Gurdon Flagg
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Woodford & Rood
Chestnut Hill School
Jason Shepherd
Solomon Porter
Childs Goodwin
Elizur Henes
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Frederick Brace
Eben Birins
Sam. Hubbard
Griswold Olmsted
Franklin Olmsted
Geo. North
Henry Hillard
Josiah Raymond
Gideon Deming
Wooden Varn Factory
Henry Cadwell
Geo. Woodruff
Sam. Miller
Chestnut Hill School
Chestnut Hill Meeting House
Chestnut Hill Cemetery
Chestnut Hill Factory
Chestnut Hill Grist Mill
Chestnut Hill Shops
Chestnut Hill Pottery
Chestnut Hill Parsonage
Chestnut Hill Meeting House
Chestnut Hill Quaker Cem
Chestnut Hill Burial Place
Chestnut Hill Tolland Co.
Chestnut Hill Hartford Co.
Chestnut Hill Toll Gate
Chestnut Hill Hotel
Chestnut Hill School
Chestnut Hill Nurs

the original six sandstone piers making up the Aquaduct of the Farmington Canal.

n the Old Canal

ished Farmington Waterway
Busy and Romantic Era

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On November 12, the "Enterprise" passed through Farmington with 60,000 shingles from Lake Seneca, the first shipment through Farmington from another town on the canal. The same day the "Wheatogue," a handsome passenger boat arrived from points north. From New Haven and points south arrived the "New England" with passengers and 100 barrels of salt. Other boats that "bucked the tides" of the canal were the "American Eagle," the "DeWitt Clinton," the "Paragon," the "Sachem," and the "Gold Hunter," most of which were gaily painted to appeal to the traveler who could ride the 80 odd miles of the canal in approximately 24 hours for less than $4, including food service.

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Merman Now Dwells In Denver
Movies and TV Claim Her, But

Her Heart Belongs to Broadway

By Hedda Hopper

ETHEL MERMAN's singing "Give My Regards to Broadway." The gal who had 12 hit shows in New York isn't going back for some time. She'll divide her time among movies, television, and her 27-room home in Denver.

But she's still sentimental about little old New York, where she started as a secretary for Caleb Bragg. Says Ethel: I graduated from high school in June and went to work for him a week later. What a job! When he did come to work, he was late, and in the summer time he stayed on his houseboat. He'd leave the office on Thursday and come back—maybe—the next Wednesday.

"With all that free time, I took a job at a little place off Sixth Avenue—did a show at 12:55 a.m., and made 60 bucks a week. I'd sing my songs, and take the subway home. While working there, Lou Erwin, the agent, signed me, so I gave up my typewriter."

If Caleb Bragg had been a slave driver of a boss, there might never have been an Ethel Merman. But I had a sneaking suspicion that she would have found time to sing a tune even if she'd been slaving over a hot typewriter 18 hours a day.

The difference between Merman and other singers is that she can stand up any hour of day or night and belt out a song. When you go to a party where Ethel's a guest, you know that before the evening's over she'll have the joint rocking with her inimitable interpretation of "There's No Business Like Show Business" — a song she's made her own, although she sang only a reprise of it in "Annie Get Your Gun."

ETHEL never has to be coaxed. When somebody yells, "How about a song?" she's on her feet.

Her phenomenal memory includes the lyrics of practically every song written. One night, when she'd given out with some obscure tune popular in the gay nineties, a wag suggested she must be a lot older than she claims, because nobody but a real old-timer would remember the words to that ditty.

"I also know the lyrics to 'The Star Spangled Banner,' " snapped Merman, "yet I wasn't around when it was written."

She can come up with exact dates of important events in her life; she'll not only tell you the date, month, year, but the day of the week and the hour.

"My first Broadway show—'Girl Crazy'—opened Oct. 14, 1930," she said. "Ginger Rogers was the star, but I got to sing George Gershwin's 'I've Got Rhythm.' " She laughed as she recalled what happened when the play tried out in Philadelphia. "Ira Gershwin wanted to add some new words to one of the numbers, but he was in New York and show time was only a few hours away. So brother George got him on the phone and I took the lyrics down in shorthand.

"On our opening night in New York, Caleb Bragg brought Walter P. Chrysler, Vincent Bendix, and Carl Fisher to the show. Only a few months before I'd been writing letters to these important men for Mr. Bragg—but never saw them. Now they were watching me.

"My dressing room was on the second floor, and I'll never forget George Gershwin bouncing in during intermission to say, 'Do you know what's happened to you?' I was too busy putting on more eye shadow to get excited. In fact, I didn't read the notices until next day. I didn't know I was supposed to.

"Gershwin gave me a picture that I'll treasure until the day I die. It's on the piano at home in Denver. He drew some notes from 'I've Got Rhythm' and wrote: 'To Ethel, a lucky composer is he who has you singing his songs. All the best. October, 1930.'

"What a wonderful person he was. He never threw his weight around and never spoke of himself. Many times on matinee days I'd glance down in the orchestra pit, and there would be Gershwin playing his own songs while the regular pianist sat on a stool beside him. No one in the audience ever knew he was there."

ETHEL MERMAN in her greatest hit, 'Call Me Madam.'

THAT PIANIST who moved aside for Gershwin was Roger Eden, one of the most valuable men M-G-M studio ever had. It was he who wrote the special musical numbers and coached Judy Garland and the other stars at that studio. He and Ethel never parted company really. When she needs special material, she calls Roger from wherever she may be. He writes it, goes to a recording studio, and plays and sings the song as best he can, then air-mails the record to her. A couple of nights later Ethel calls him and sings it back to him, to be sure she's doing it to his liking.

In "No Business Like Show Business" — with Marilyn Monroe, Donald O'Connor, Dan Dailey, and Johnnie Ray—Ethel has her first real acting part. "I have crying scenes and everything," she told me. She's in 10 of the 23 numbers. The finale runs 12 minutes and is the most expensive single number ever screened. It cost the studio $425,000.

The picture was supposed to go into production a year ago, but Director Walter Lang had an operation just before the starting date, so it was postponed. Ethel considers Lang her lucky charm in pictures. He guided her in the hit, "Call Me Madam."

Lang may be her lucky director, but Colorado is her lucky state. She was vacationing on a Glenwood Springs ranch with Dorothy Stickney and Howard Lindsay. Ethel was taking a sun bath one day when Lindsay yelled from an upstairs window, "Hey, Ethel! I've got an idea for a show."

"Yeah?" she said. "What about?"

"Perle Mesta," shouted Howard.

"Who's Perle Mesta?" Ethel wanted to know.

Lindsay was tired, so he said, "We'll talk about it at dinner." Later he explained: "When you come to this ranch, get into your bluejeans and turn your face to the sun; you're everything American. You've just got to play Perle Mesta."

LINDSAY was so excited about the idea he called his partner, Russell Crouse, and a year later they finished "Call Me Madam." Perle will never get a greater compliment than the one Merman paid her the night of our interview: "She's a great dame!"

It was at the first anniversary party for "Call Me Madam" that Ethel met Bob Six. As president of Continental Air Lines, he'd been in and out of New York once a month for years. "But I never saw him before that night," she said, "and he's not a boy you can miss. On Oct. 20, 1952—a Saturday night—he called me for a date. We were married the next May."

The Sixes live in an old house of handcarved oak that couldn't be duplicated today. It's situated on six acres of landscaped grounds. "There's no humidity even at 95 degrees," bragged Ethel, "and you can breathe fresh air and really live." That's where she's going to stay put except for time off to do four big TV shows—all live.

Merman left Broadway with an unblemished record—12 hits, no errors. Nobody else in show business can make that statement. How she managed to come up with top shows all through the years was revealed by Irving Berlin, who wrote her music in "Annie Get Your Gun" and "Call Me Madam." "No song writer would dare write a bad lyric for Ethel Merman," said Berlin, "because the way she sings it, every last word can be heard in the back row of the balcony." That might be one of the reasons they're never vacant when Merman sings.

Hedda Hopper's comments on the film world and its personalities appear daily and Sunday in The Courant.

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POSTER advertised canal facilities.

REMAINS of three of the original six sandstone piers making up the Aquaduct of the Farmington Canal.

Down the Old Canal

Long Vanished Farmington Waterway Witnessed a Busy and Romantic Era

The author of this article, an instructor in the science department of the New Britain Senior High School, is a native of Farmington, and has long engrossed himself in its colorful history. This piece is the result of much patient research. The Courant is indebted to the Farmington Library for the pictures which illustrate the text.—The Editor.

By C. J. Nordstrom

WITH THE emphasis placed today on speed in transportation, whether it be by car, plane, train or boat, it is interesting to glance back to a more leisurely era, approximately a century and a quarter ago when the chief means of travel between towns in Connecticut was by ordinary highway, sandy and dusty in summer, buried by snow in winter, and deep in mud in the spring.

In 1898 the Talcott Mt. Turnpike Co. was chartered to run from Hartford through Farmington to New Hartford, and subsequently to the Massachusetts State line. Also chartered was the Hartford New Haven Turnpike Co. Along these thoroughfares the traveler paid his toll at various gates, according to his style of carriage, from 4 cents if on horseback up to 25 cents if in a four-wheeled carriage. Tolls were not levied on Sundays as it was assumed that Sabbath travelers were either going to or returning from church.

With the appearance of the stage coach the traveler could leave Hartford at 3 a.m. and reach Boston at 6 p.m. on either Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, at a fare of $6.50. The new Post-Coach Line Despatch ran thrice weekly from Hartford to New Haven via Farmington, Southington, and Cheshire in six hours, arriving in time for the 5 o'clock steamer from the port. On the Connecticut River the steamboat "Experiment" made the trip to Saybrook on Tuesdays and Fridays.

FARTHER North, in contrast to this means of communication, was the completion of 260 miles of the Erie Canal. To a few visionary-minded citizens of New Haven this provided the inspiration that led to the construction of a waterway that eventually carried horse-drawn boats from Southwick, Massachusetts, south to Farmington, across the river by Aqueduct, and on to New Haven, giving the town of Southwick and intermediate bordering towns direct access to the sea.

James Hillhouse was the sparkplug among the public-spirited citizens of New Haven who wanted water communication with the interior towns of the state. In January, 1822, in Farmington, 17 towns were represented at a meeting at which the Farmington Canal Co. was chartered. A survey the following year estimated the cost of the project at $420,698.88, which eventually proved to be considerably less than the actual cost. Approximately two million dollars was poured into the canal construction, much of the added cost being due to unforeseeable barriers resulting primarily from weather conditions.

THIS MAN-MADE river was only a part of a grand project which, if it became a reality, would create a water-route from the St. Lawrence River in Canada to the Long Island Sound, passing through parts of four New England States, and of a still more grandiose project which, if carried out, would join the port of New Haven with the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, exceeding the former in length and in territory served, this being by way of a branch passing through Collinsville, New Hartford, Colebrook, on through New York State.

The Farmington waterway was to connect with the Hampshire and Hampden Canal to be constructed in Massachusetts and which was to follow the west bank of the Connecticut River to Brattleboro, Vermont, following the New Hampshire-Vermont border to Lake Memphramagog through which connection was possible with the St. Lawrence River. The Connecticut River was to be crossed at three points: at Brattleboro, east into New Hampshire; at Charleston, west into Vermont, and again just south of Windsor, east into New Hampshire; thence north to the lake.

On July 4, 1825, in Salmon Brook Village in Granby, the first excavation was made by Governor Walcott. Present at the occasion were the Simsbury Artillery, the Governor of the state, the president of the Canal Co., the directors and stockholders, approximately 2,500 citizens from Connecticut and Massachusetts, and a procession of carriages, other vehicles, and horses extending two miles in length.

Two years later, Southwick Ponds in Massachusetts, now known as Lake Congamond, was joined with New Haven Harbor. Water was let into the U-shaped depression at Cheshire. November 4, 1827 the first boat, the "Fayette" plied the waters of the canal between New Haven and Cheshire. The following year on June 20, 1828, Farmington celebrated its occasion, the launching of the "James Hillhouse," with cannon-firing, bell-ringing, and music from the famous Phoenix Band. Water entered from the Feeder Dam in Unionville, which joined the main canal just west of the Aqueduct. The boat was drawn by four large horses, handsomely decked, ridden by black boys dressed in white. Owned, according to the account given in The Hartford Courant of that day, by Messrs. Cowles and Dickenson of Farmington, it was named after the president of the company, the chief pillar of the project, and was the first boat to cross the Aqueduct. Captained by Dickenson, father of its co-owner, it was the finest and most eloquent of all the boats that ever "sailed" the canal.

THE WATERCOURSE was fed by numerous brooks and several feeder dams chief of which was the one west of Farmington which emptied into the system near the Aqueduct, supplying the section of unavoidable leakage between Northampton and Farmington. To offset the effects of protracted storms waste gates were installed at various points along the way through which surplus water escaped.

On November 12, the "Enterprise" passed through Farmington with 60,000 shingles from Lake Seneca, the first shipment through Farmington from another town on the canal. The same day the "Wheatogue," a handsome passenger boat arrived from points north. From New Haven and points south arrived the "New England" with passengers and 100 barrels of salt. Other boats that "bucked the tides" of the canal were the "American Eagle," the "DeWitt Clinton," the "Paragon," the "Sachem," and the "Gold Hunter," most of which were gaily painted to appeal to the traveler who could ride the 80 odd miles of the canal in approximately 24 hours for less than $4, including food service. None of these boats was owned by the Canal Co. All were the property of private parties, individuals, and companies that paid toll for the use of the inland waterway.

As navigation increased so did promotion and speculation in property adjoining the canal. Taverns were built at convenient points. Hotels were erected. The architectural fame of the Union Hotel of the port of Farmington, as the town became known, spread far and wide. The canal was coming of age. However it was not without its troubles, financial, chiefly. Freshets, floods, droughts, and the work of malicious individuals all led to financial embarrassment which was relieved only by the issuance of new stock. In 1829 the city of New Haven subscribed to an additional one hundred thousand dollars worth. For the following six years New Haven and adjoining towns benefited notably from increased business and water transportation.

THE CANAL Company was not without the usual reorganizations. It was born the Farmington Canal Co. but subsequently merged with the Hampshire and Hampden Canal Co. Eventually, in 1836, it became reorganized as the New Haven & Northampton Co.

Interesting was the distribution of stock of the Farmington Canal Co. at this time:

	No. Shares
Mechanics Bank of New Haven	2,000
City of New Haven	1,000
Citizens of New Haven	1,229
Citizens of New York City	924
Citizens of Farmington	125
Citizens of Cheshire	74
Citizens of Simsbury	46
Citizens of Other Towns	16
Total	5,414

The year before reorganization, 1835, the first boat passed from the canal into the Connecticut River.

Dec. 3, 1838 sounded the death knell of the New England water intercommunication system. On this day the Hartford-New Haven Railroad opened its tracks between Meriden and New Haven, covering the 18 miles in 57 minutes. However the canal carried on diminishing business for another 10 years before giving way to the iron horse.

During the years of lush business, merchandise found its way from China and the Indies up the canal and New England's products, chiefly lumber and tobacco, were carried down bound for ports abroad.

THE YEARS 1841-42 were years of heavy business. Tons of merchandise were shipped between the four New England states it served. In 1843 floods brought damage to the extent of $20,000. In 1844 the entire season, which averaged eight months, was navigable. The year 1845 brought a drought lasting from July to September, followed by a breech costing $7,000. 1846-47 saw the railroad diverting more and more business, and the following year connecting Farmington with Plainville, ushering in the final chapter to the project that brought business and profit to scores, loss to many, recreation to both old and young, to the youngster who loved to jump on deck and steal a ride, to the boy who loved to swim, to the many youthful Izaak Waltons, and to the hundreds of Hans Brinkers who almost religiously spent their Saturdays and Sunday afternoons and evenings on ice.

However, the canal had its enemies also. It was hated by the farmer who saw leakage turn his fields into swamps, and who swore every time he tried to draw a load of hay across the rickety highset bridges that frightened even the cattle grazing within hearing distance. But isolating him from his livestock by running the watercourse, in a few rare instances, between house and barn was the last straw. This extreme of exercising the right of eminent domain fired the anger of more than one farmer to the point where he vented his wrath by breeching the bank, leaving the boats high and dry, or better—low and dry; but not a farmer's boy could be found, living within walking distance of the canal, who did not regard it as his best friend.

SOME INTERESTING engineering facts attended the construction of the canal. From tidewater at New Haven to Northampton, Massachusetts, a 310 foot elevation and a 213 foot drop made necessary the construction of 60 locks in the 80 mile stretch. At certain points, incidentally, the remains of some locks are quite in evidence and some of the lockkeepers' homes are today occupied and in good repair. At one point on Southwick Ponds a floating bridge 700 feet long provided the tow-path. The canal averaged 20 feet in width at the bottom, 34-36 feet from bank to bank at the top, and 4 feet in depth. The tow-path, which was on one side only, had a width of 10 feet. In the river at Farmington, supporting an overhead canal 12 feet wide, stood six pyramidal piers 40 feet long and 30 feet high, a masterpiece of engineering for that day. The wooden trough they upheld was lined with clay to prevent leakage.

Chief engineer of the entire project was one David Hurd, who aided in the construction of the Erie Canal, and who was succeeded by Professor Henry W. Farnam of New Haven who, incidentally, walked across the Aqueduct as late as 1862.

Another engineering feat was the construction in 1838 by a Benjamin D. Beecher of a boat with propellor propulsion which for some reason did not become generally used.

1848 saw the last boat on the canal waters. These floating cars which had carried tons of merchandise, excursions parties, and thousands of travelers up and down the "river" had now lost practically all value and were sold to farmers for use as barns, sheds and chicken coops. This money plus that realized from the sale of muskrat furs

and the hay harvested from the canal banks were the only financial returns to the company after cessation of activity.

Even though the grandiose dream of the canal fathers had been carried out only from New Haven to Northampton the project benefited New England by providing improved transportation, acting as a stimulus and stepping stone for subsequent and faster means of transportation, opening new markets and industries and stimulating the construction of many factories, providing an outlet for towns of the interior, providing labor and increasing circulation of money and making it possible for towns to "get acquainted" with one another.

TODAY, INCIDENTALLY, anyone who travels the so-called College Highway traces, more or less, the old Farmington Canal route.

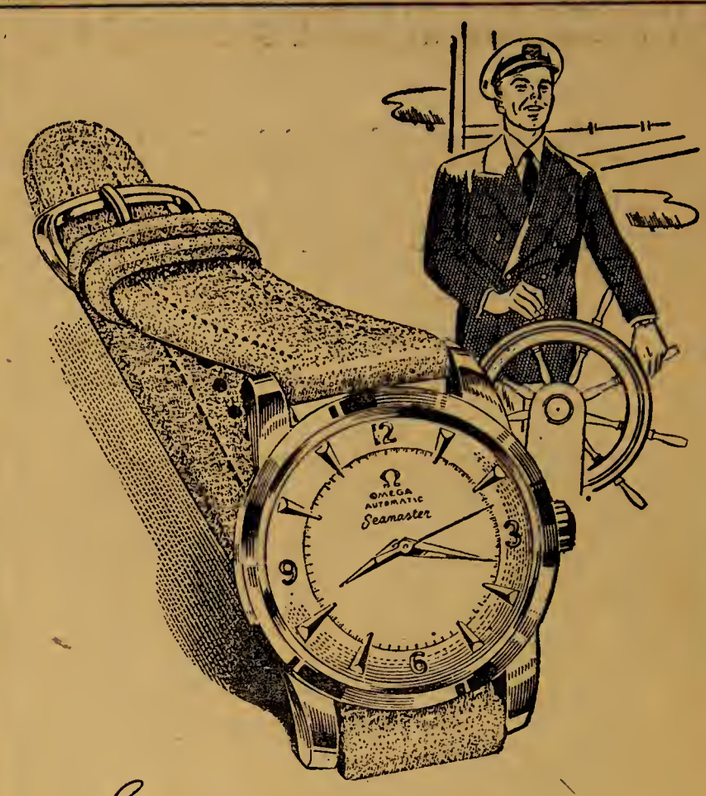
Now why this detailed history of New England's only internal waterway? Three of the six piers of huge sandstone blocks, making up the Aqueduct that originally supported the canal spanning the Farmington River, still stand, largely intact but slowly yielding to natural forces, particularly to the relentless pressure of expanding roots of trees growing thereon, a persistent force that unless checked will eventually cause complete disintegration of the pyramids. Surely these remnants of one of New England's early and unique systems of transportation are worth preserving. Surely they, and the adjoining sections of the canal still in existence, are as much a part of early New England as are the various structures in Sturbridge, in Lebanon, and elsewhere.

This also brings to mind the old iron forge in Roxbury and the forges and furnaces in northwestern Connecticut, the cradle of American industry, all of which are falling to ruins.

Would not a noteworthy project for the State be to take an active hand in preserving these historical monuments, perhaps by purchasing the sections of land on which they are situated and making them into State Parks?

England has its National Trust that takes over and preserves for posterity some of the historical castles and estates that can no longer be privately maintained. Why cannot the same system be put into operation in our own country? Let us activate ourselves and begin a concerted drive toward this end and have Connecticut set the example on restoration and preservation.

CANAL BED is now roadway. Banks on other side formed tow paths for horses to pull boats.



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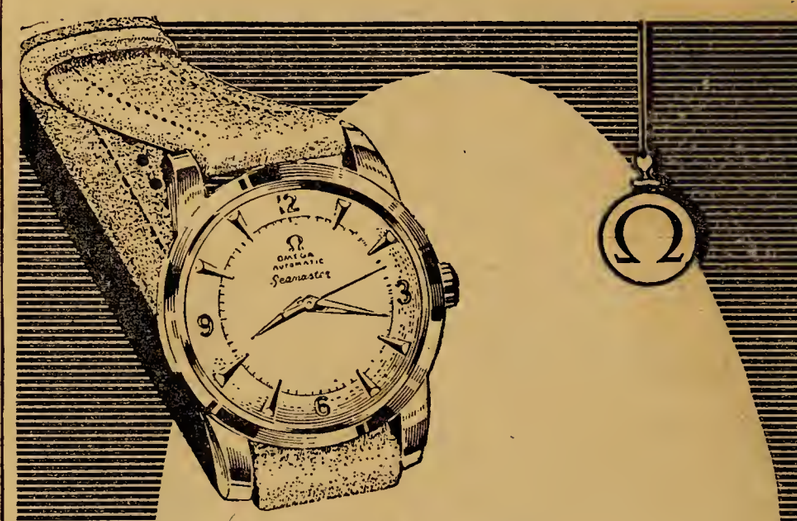

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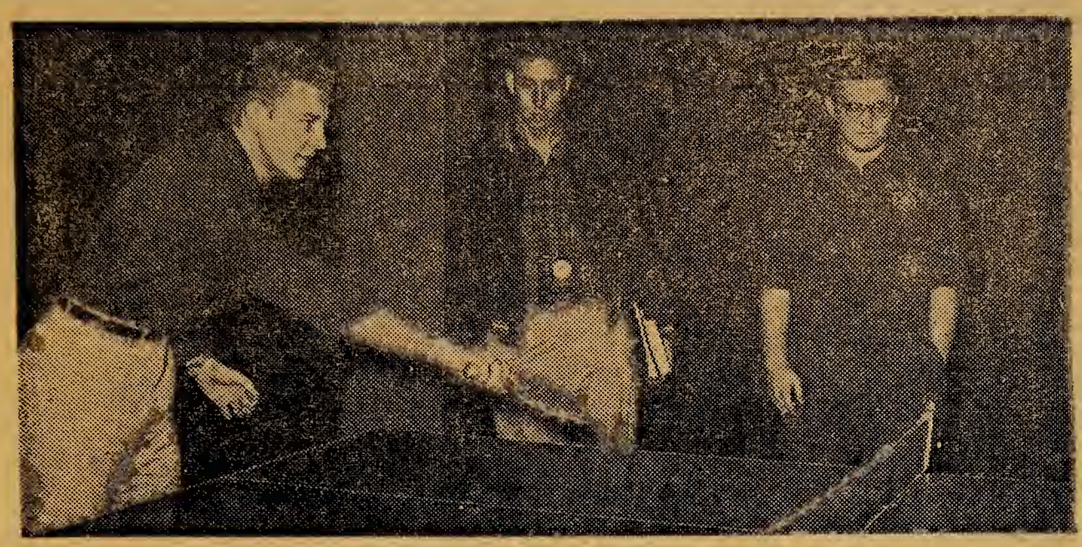
The Brownell Club

Top scholarship is hallmark of Trinity's non-fraternity group

By Richard A. Freytag



RELAXATION takes various forms. Here are (l-r) Dick Welch, Ed Fitzpatrick Vito Cabi during ping pong game. *(Courant Photos—Herman F. Marshall)*

BROWNELL CLUB, founded in 1948, serves as social outlet for non-fraternity college men. Membership is largely composed of Hartford students.

IN COLLEGE, to excel scholastically is to realize a major goal; therefore, it is a field in which all undergraduate groups pride themselves. Trinity College is especially proud of the academic record of a campus group, composed mainly of Hartford men, which was formed in November of 1948. It was organized by several non-fraternity men who called themselves the "Brownell Club," after Trinity's first president, Bishop Thomas Church Brownell. The club's primary purpose was to be a social outlet for any non-fraternity man who wished to join. Among the seven principles on which the club was formed was that of maintaining the highest possible scholastic average.

In 1951 when 13 out of 16 men who were elected to the national honorary society, Phi Beta Kappa, were from the club, and when Tom Woods, who had helped found the club three years before, was class valedictorian, it was evident that the goal of a high scholastic average was being realized. These top scholars were not being picked from the student body as a whole especially for their academic prowess as the Brownell Club was established by charter as a "non-selective" organization.

MOST OF the men who joined were students from Hartford and the surrounding towns and they dedicated themselves to getting top grades. In the fall of 1952, four years after its formation, the Brownell Club held the top scholastic average for campus groups of 80.70. Ever since that date the club has been in first place scholastically and it has raised its numerical average at least a point higher each year so that it currently stands at 82.73. On more than one occasion the number of "Brownellians" elected to Phi Beta Kappa equalled the number from Trinity's nine fraternities combined. In addition, the club has always been well represented on the other national honorary societies such as physics' Sigma Pi Sigma and the social sciences' Pi Gamma Mu.

While scholastic excellence is the highlight of Brownell members, the basic purpose served by the club is still that of a social outlet. The club attends football games and outings en masse, and holds parties and dances in its house on the college campus. The members also participate in college intramural sports with a fairly good record, particularly in ping-pong championships. Party permissions are granted to the group six times a semester, and these gatherings generally constitute an informal place to bring dates. The club has a small dance band for at least two of the large college weekends during the year.

THE MEMBERSHIP of the Brownell Club has always been at least 90 per cent composed of men from the Hartford area. The five men who founded the club in 1949 and were graduated in the class of 1951 were Larry Jennings of Rocky Hill, who was also elected the club's first president; Tom Woods of Wethersfield; and Bill Schaughnessy, Bill Vounatso, and Bob Wilson of Hartford. Justin Maccarone of Hartford was elected the second president in the fall term of 1949. The second term of that year Bob Custer of East Hartford took over the presidential position, to be followed in succeeding terms by Bob Wilson, John Nesteruk, Bruce Fox, and Dick Roback all of Hartford, Lew Taft of West Hartford, and the current president Dick Welch of East Hartford.

The men in the Brownell Club find that the nature of the club is the greatest help in maintaining individual scholarship. As it is an organization in which duties and attendance are largely optional, a man can devote to the club any or all of the time he has free from his college work. The Brownell Club does not subject its members to the demands on time and effort generally required of fraternity members. The clubhouse provides a place to relax and play ping-pong or cards, or to study if the individual so desires.

In this atmosphere the Trinity College Brownell Club expects its members to maintain its top scholastic position on campus and to raise its numerical average still higher in future years.

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